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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ROSA'S GARDEN

A PLAY

BY

KATHERINE KOLLER WENSEL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER'S OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1987

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled ROSA'S GARDEN, A PLAY submitted by Katherine Koller Wensel in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master's in Arts.

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(Supervisor)

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Date: 13 April 1987

ABSTRACT

This play is about nesting and abandonment in a primarily female context. The title character, Rosa, has decided to leave her garden, and those who depend upon her in it, including her two granddaughters, Camellia and Daisy, and her longtime friend and neighbor, the Old Man. Camellia and Daisy must then find their own place, if any, in the garden. So must Brock, the father of Daisy's child, and the Old Man.

In Act Two, Rosa returns after a year away to witness the results of her absence in the garden. She now knows what it is like to be alone, as do the rest of the characters. Rosa and the others unite, and divide again, but this time, someone will be looking after her garden.

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CHARACTERS

ROSA, almost seventy
CAMELLIA, her eldest granddaughter, thirty-two
DAISY, CAMELLIA'S sister, twenty-six
BROCK, twenty-seven
OLD MAN, ROSA's next door neighbor, in his seventies

PLACE

Except for the first scene, in a graveyard, the action takes place in a garden behind an old-style house in a medium sized city, somewhere in between North and South.

TIME

Act One begins on the night before Mothers' Day, and ends about four weeks later. Act Two occurs about a year later, over the span of about ten days.

SET

A tree with a platform in it in the center of the garden. Some forms for chairs, benches. Some potted plants. Blankets. There is a ladder leaning against the tree, and a swing hanging from it. There is a toolshed by the fence that separates Rosa's garden from the Old Man's yard.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A graveyard at dusk.

OLD MAN: Where the hell are we, Rosa?

ROSA: (She flashes her flashlight.) Almost there.

OLD MAN: Can't see a thing. Maybe we should come back tomorrow. Geordie won't mind.

ROSA: What's the matter, afraid of ghosts? (She flashes on him.)

OLD MAN: Nope. I just like to see where I'm going. (He takes a long drink.)

ROSA: Watch out, there's a hole over here. I smell soil that's just been dug up.

OLD MAN: Wait for me.

ROSA: Right there.

OLD MAN: Hold on, Rosa. (They step around the hole. OLD MAN stops, takes a drink.)

ROSA: Must be all the dust.

OLD MAN: What dust?

ROSA: All the dust in this graveyard. Making you so thirsty! (She searches the tombstones with her flashlight.)

OLD MAN: Well . . . just because the party's over for them doesn't mean I can't have a little nip.

ROSA: Remember, you've got to drive me home yet.

OLD MAN: No problem. . . . That was one hell of a long drive, Rosa. You're lucky I'm such a devoted next door neighbor.

ROSA: Oh, you weren't doing anything anyway.

OLD MAN: How do you know? (He continues to drink.) I could have planned a social evening with a friend.

ROSA: What friend? I know all your friends, and they both died last month.

OLD MAN: That was really inconsiderate! Knocking off in the very same week? (Grumbles.) They always did stick together like glue.

ROSA: Have some respect, Old Man. They're here! Mary and Joe. They're listening.

OLD MAN: Here's looking at you! (He toasts.) To Mary and Joe. (To ROSA.) You know, I could have met some new friends.

ROSA: Where?

OLD MAN: The supermarket. Some new lady tenants moved in the duplex down the street. Sisters.

ROSA: Really? You're probably wise to open up your circle of friends.

OLD MAN: What circle? You're the only one left! It's just you and me, Rosa.

ROSA: Let's find Geordie.

OLD MAN: Georgie Porgie, pudding 'n pie. (Drinks.) Kissed the girls and made them. . . . Whoa, look at that sky!

ROSA: (Bending down to a grave, patting the earth.) Ah, here you are. Geordie.

OLD MAN: The Northern Lights! Wowee!

ROSA: I found him. He's here.

OLD MAN: Hey Geordie, do you folks up here always get such great picture shows? Rosa, look up!

ROSA: Soft shaved spikes dancing in the sky.

OLD MAN: Hell of a sight. (He drinks.)

ROSA: You could probably get a better view from up on that knoll.

OLD MAN: (Takes flashlight; starts to climb ladder to platform in "tree.") Yeah. I'll just crawl up this little hill and hallucinate!

ROSA: Dear Geordie.

OLD MAN: Don't mind me. Just go ahead as if I wasn't here. (Pause.) And he was. (He sits.)

OLD MAN looks at the sky, but responds to ROSA's dialogue with Geordie. ROSA does not see or hear the OLD MAN.

ROSA: (Laughs.) No, Geordie, the Old Man hasn't kicked the bucket yet! He's still bothering me. Well, it's been lonely without you. And he's such a help in the garden, you know. But you never had the time, dear. The shop kept you such long hours. But I had my garden, and the girls. Daisy? Oh, she's just grand. I think. I mean I haven't heard from her in a while. (She takes some dead daisies out of the vase by his tombstone.) You did? She was just here a few weeks ago? Yes, I know she's going to graduate this year! You're going to be such a proud Grandpa! (Pause, then in a worried voice.) Camellia is doing fine. She's been a bit squirrelly lately, but. . . it must be the business. (She has heard this before.) I know, being the boss isn't easy. (Pause, then apprehensively.) Me? I'm well, dear. I always feel better in the spring. Oh, you're right! That was a hard winter, wasn't it? I just froze. (Hiding a chuckle.) Well, maybe not as bad as you. (Pensive again.) This winter, I felt like I was really fading, my petals loosening and

starting to drop. (Complimented.) Thank you. It must be the fresh air. Yes, it has been a long time . . . you know, tonight it's exactly seven years you've been gone.

OLD MAN: Can't get her to budge an inch.

ROSA: We had forty years together.

OLD MAN: (Grunts.) Seemed like eighty.

ROSA: But now . . . I don't know how else to say it. Now it's time for me to . . . leave you.

OLD MAN: Rosa? You mean you're finally going to give him the axe? No offence, Geordie.

ROSA: It's a big step for me. The biggest since . . . I married you.

OLD MAN: Rosa, I told you, it doesn't have to be . . . marriage! (He starts to climb down.)

ROSA: It means leaving the house . . .

OLD MAN: But Rosa, it will only be next door.

ROSA: . . . and the garden . . .

OLD MAN: We can take down the fence. We'll make a double yard. You could rent out your house, but keep the garden. We could make it even bigger!

ROSA: . . . and the girls . . .

OLD MAN: Oh, they won't care. Even if they did, you can't let your granddaughters stand in the way!

ROSA: . . . and the shop . . .

OLD MAN: Geordie's shop has nothing to do with it! You could . . . sell your shares to Cammy if you feel like it's adultery!

ROSA: . . . but the shop will always be there. Camellia is running it so well, just like you did, Geordie.

OLD MAN: Maybe better!

ROSA: And it means leaving you.

OLD MAN: But you'll have me!

OLD MAN holds out his arms to ROSA, who still does not see him. He does not interrupt ROSA's next monologue. He is shocked and hurt.

ROSA: But Geordie. It's like the Northern Lights. I can't ignore it anymore. A storm of light . . . inside of me. I can't stop it. Like the rushing moment of birth. It's pushing me, pulling me . . . to a place where it's warm all year. South. To plant a wonder garden. Full of huge vegetables and fruit. And tropical flowers in the rain. I want an abundance of color and motion and fragrance. Faster growth. Larger shapes, different textures of green . . .

OLD MAN: Oh, Rosa.

ROSA: Oh, Geordie, I wish you could come, too. But you'll be there, in my heart, always. (Pause.) I'll be gone by the fall. I won't be back again until they bring me here to lay beside you. Goodbye, Geordie.

OLD MAN: (Angry.) "Goodbye, Geordie." As if he could *care!*

ROSA: (Startled.) Oh, Old Man.

OLD MAN: (Sarcastic.) "Goodbye, Geordie." (Pause.) Didn't he catch that seven years ago?

ROSA: This is the last time.

OLD MAN: Why didn't you just say, "See you later"? Isn't that your place over there?

ROSA: I'm going to find my dream garden first.

OLD MAN: I heard you. (Sarcastic.) Mary and Joe and me, the whole bunch of us ghosts, we all heard you!

ROSA: I thought you were watching the Northern Lights!

OLD MAN: You made me feel like I was eavesdropping over the fence!

ROSA: I had to tell him first.

OLD MAN: I might as well have been on the moon!

ROSA: I was going to tell you tomorrow.

OLD MAN: Tell me now!

ROSA: I'm going!

OLD MAN: Where?

ROSA: I don't know exactly. I've got to go find it.

OLD MAN: What? The Garden of Eden?

ROSA: Don't mock me.

OLD MAN: How do you expect me to believe you, when here you are talking to a dead man in his grave!

ROSA: You wouldn't know what it's like to be so close to someone for so many years.

OLD MAN: Like hell. I've known you longer than Geordie did, if you count the seven years he's been dead!

ROSA: He was my husband!

OLD MAN: He still is! He's still floating around, whispering at you. (To Geordie.) I can hear ya! You don't scare me! Not for a blessed minute.

ROSA: Get hold of yourself, Old Man.

OLD MAN: (Pause. Pleading.) Oh, Rosie. If you leave me, I might just as well . . .

ROSA: You might just as well what? Are you going to wander off and die, just like Joe did after Mary had her heart attack?

OLD MAN: (Mad.) Hell. No. (Sits.)

ROSA: (Sits down with him.) Can I have some?

OLD MAN: Suit yourself.

ROSA: (She drinks.) Ah, they're fading. (Pause.) Look.

OLD MAN: (Still mad.) Yeah.

ROSA: They've never felt so close before. As if I could just stand up on that hill there and feel the golden green dust in my hand.

OLD MAN: (Pouting.) Like fish.

ROSA: Fish?

OLD MAN: (Looking down into his jar.) Fish scales, in the water.

ROSA: (Encouraging him.) Yes, I suppose they do look like that.

OLD MAN: Reminds me of the night I saw them out fishing.

ROSA: The Northern Lights?

OLD MAN: Yeah. It was a long time ago.

ROSA: What happened?

OLD MAN: Thought I was going to sink.

ROSA: Your boat had a leak?

OLD MAN: Never made a leaky boat in my life. No! I was catching so many fish! I never caught so many fish at once, ever! One hundred and seventeen perch! I couldn't

leave that hole, not that goldmine, even after it got dark. I was afraid to start up my motor, in case a warden might hear me. Then I saw the Northern Lights. All alone out there, with just the sound of fish flopping against each other. That's what finally made me go in. I thought, nothing can beat this, even if I do get caught! But I didn't.

ROSA: You must have had a fine time the next day, cleaning them all.

OLD MAN: Me? I gave 'em to my wife to clean.

ROSA: No wonder your wife left you. A hundred and seventeen fish!

OLD MAN: Never found it again, neither. Until tonight.

ROSA: Tonight?

OLD MAN: When I heard you tell Geordie goodbye I had the same feeling as that night with all the fish, and the Northern Lights up there like they were clapping and waving at me! I thought I found my goldmine this time.

ROSA: (Laughs.) Oh, I'd be a catch alright, if I had a dollar for every seed I planted. I just about forgot. Where's my bag? (Takes flashlight.)

OLD MAN: Did you bring a picnic? For us, at dawn?

ROSA: A picnic? I don't really think this is the place. . . . Ah, here it is. (She takes out some plants in a sealed plastic bag, and her trowel.)

OLD MAN: Should have guessed. You never go anywhere without having to dig up the ground. Isn't this illegal?

ROSA: Didn't stop you from taking a hundred and seventeen fish, did it? This might be the last time I come here. . . .

OLD MAN: Not the last time.

ROSA: O.K., you old rascal, but I won't be able to do this again. Hold the flashlight for me. (Guides his hand with hers.) Right there, good. Besides, it's alright to plant some kinds of flowers.

OLD MAN: Just the kind you dig up in the fall. What are those?

ROSA: Forget-me-nots.

OLD MAN: Figures.

ROSA: (Quietly, privately.) I won't ever forget you, Geordie. (Brightly.) There. That looks better. Can't stand those silly little vases they stick out here. Flowers look so lost in them, and so dead. A place like this needs life!

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

Rosa's garden, the next day. MUSIC from OLD MAN's radio. OLD MAN is in the tree. ROSA enters, spreads a grey blanket like earth, and begins to plant seeds in the bed.

OLD MAN: Ah, oh, eeeeeee! (Falls from tree, clutching one branch. Chatter of birds.)

ROSA: Aren't you a little grey to be playing Tarzan?

OLD MAN: (Drops to ground, very close to ROSA.) Shit.

ROSA: No, that's not what he says to Jane.

OLD MAN: Sorry. (Takes out handkerchief.) I meant the bird. Just shit on me.

ROSA: What were you doing up there?

OLD MAN: I was going to prune your tree, but I couldn't use the ladder, so I climbed up. All those apple blossoms smelled so good, I just had to stay and enjoy it. . . . You know, I can see better up there. I saw you come out and . . . from up in that tree, you look at least ten years younger.

ROSA: Oh, go fly a kite.

OLD MAN: I moved to get another look, and . . . I fell out of the tree.

ROSA: And?

OLD MAN: You look ten years younger from down here, too.

ROSA: Thank you. (Pause.) So why didn't you use the ladder? It's been sitting right there for at least two weeks,waiting for you to prune that apple tree.

OLD MAN: Me Tarzan, you Jane. Go look, Jane.

ROSA: At what? I'm busy.

OLD MAN: Come, on, have a little looksee. I'll hold the ladder for you, and you climb up. (Bird chatter). Really quiet, now.

ROSA: Oh, there, I see it. It's not even in the tree. It's on the top rung of the ladder! One-two-three-four eggs!

OLD MAN: Dart in the ass.

ROSA: Quiet. Here comes the mother. Oh, she's a beautiful bird. Very young. Very proud. I'll bet it's her first brood. (Bird sounds.) Oh alright, I'll get out of your way. Don't bite my nose off! (Coming down.)

OLD MAN: Can't use the ladder for three or four more weeks, now.

ROSA: It's not every day you get a robin's nest in your ladder. We can go peek in anytime we want.

OLD MAN: Hell of a place to put it.

ROSA: Why don't you make another one? We've been sharing the same ladder forever, it seems, and you know, robins like to come back to the same spot each spring.

OLD MAN: No point in making a new one if you won't be here. One ladder is plenty for the robins and me.

ROSA: I can't remember the last time I had a robin's nest in that tree. It will be pleasant to have a family living upstairs. Someone to check on when I'm out here all day.

OLD MAN: Nice thing about that family is they'll be gone in a month.

ROSA: There's nothing wrong with having family around.

OLD MAN: First they bombard you, like those robins, and then they're gone forever.

ROSA: Don't be such an old goat!

OLD MAN: Haven't seen Cammy around lately.

ROSA: She's missed having tea with me for three weeks now.

OLD MAN: Maybe she's found a boyfriend.

ROSA: I wish.

OLD MAN: Have you called her?

ROSA: No. I sent her a letter.

OLD MAN: What for?

ROSA: I couldn't do it over the phone. I feel so awkward doing it anyway.

OLD MAN: You sent her an invitation to come over? Rosa.

ROSA: No, no. I mean about the money I need to take out of the shop. To go find my new garden. I think I've finally decided where. Look, here. (She takes out a travel brochure.) Doesn't this look wonderful? It's got the climate I want, and the vegetation, and it's not too developed yet. Not too many tourists.

CAMELLIA enters.

OLD MAN: (Opens out the brochure, looking at it centrefold-style, while Rosa peeks over his shoulder.) I like it.

CAMELLIA: What are you looking at, you sexy Old Man!

OLD MAN: Cammy, my girl!

ROSA: (She hides it away.) It's nothing.

OLD MAN: Come on, Rosa, let her see it.

ROSA: Old Man! Oh, alright.

CAMELLIA: It's just a map, Grandma.

ROSA: That's all. (Changing subject.) So where have you been?

CAMELLIA: Working.

ROSA: But you always make it over on Sundays.

CAMELLIA: You know I've been drowning in the Mothers' Day rush. Have you forgotten what day it is? Here, Happy Mothers' Day. (Gives ROSA a bouquet from out of her briefcase.) I know you don't love cut flowers but they were left over. Happy Mothers' Day, Grandma.

ROSA: Thank you. They're lovely!

CAMELLIA: And just so you don't feel left out, Old Man, here's one for you! (She buttonholes him.)

OLD MAN: Thanks, Cammy. Makes me feel like I'm getting ready for a wedding. Wouldn't be thinking of getting married on me, now, would you?

CAMELLIA: Me? Are you kidding?

OLD MAN: What about that accountant fella?

CAMELLIA: (Laughs.) Oh, I'd save the shop a bundle of money if I married him.

ROSA: Camellia.

OLD MAN: He's interested. Why don't you go out with him?

CAMELLIA: I never mix business and pleasure.

OLD MAN: You never mix pleasure with anything since you've been married to that shop.

CAMELLIA: (Laughs.) Sounds like grounds for divorce.

ROSA: Let me get some tea.

OLD MAN: Hell, we don't need tea. Cammy needs a little sniff of wine!

CAMELLIA: Uugh, that rotgut of yours?

OLD MAN: Number one quality homemade.

CAMELLIA: Sure, pour me a sip.

OLD MAN: That's my girl. How about you, Rosa?

ROSA: No thanks. I had enough of that stuff last night.

CAMELLIA: Grandma?

OLD MAN: She drank so much that she fell asleep in the car. Looked lovely, sleeping with the moonlight in her hair.

CAMELLIA: Where were you two? What were you doing?

ROSA: Nothing special, dear. Just visiting your Grandpa.

CAMELLIA: At night? You were at the graveyard last night? Drinking wine in the moonlight?

OLD MAN: Wish I could have taken her home with me.

ROSA: We were just planting some flowers.

CAMELLIA: Grandma, really. You don't plant flowers there. People buy them from me. That's why I'm in business!

OLD MAN: So how is business?

CAMELLIA: Oh, great.

ROSA: How are *you*, dear?

CAMELLIA: Not so great.

OLD MAN: Driving you bananas, eh?

CAMELLIA: Can't sleep anymore, can't seem to eat properly, can't think about anything else! I feel like the place is dissolving me.

OLD MAN: It's got so big that you can get lost in there.

ROSA: But you built it that big. (She finds some water and a container for the bouquet a little distance from the others.)

CAMELLIA: And I can't stop! I keep thinking of ways to make it bigger, and bigger, until I can't contain it anymore.

OLD MAN: You need a little distraction.

CAMELLIA: (Flirting.) You distract me.

OLD MAN: (Smiles, then whispers.) So what do you want to know?

CAMELLIA: The map. What's she up to?

OLD MAN: Thinking about a little holiday.

CAMELLIA: So that's why. . .

ROSA: (Indicating bouquet.) Where did these come from, Camellia?

CAMELLIA: South America. Why?

ROSA: Just wondered.

CAMELLIA: Bet you'd like to see those flowers on the branch, wouldn't you? (Winks at OLD MAN.) Hey, why don't you take a little holiday, and go see for yourself?

ROSA: Well, actually, I was thinking of a. . . trip. But to a tropical island. The one on the map.

CAMELLIA: It looks wonderful. You've never really had a faraway holiday, have you?

ROSA: Well, neither have you.

OLD MAN: You two could go together!

CAMELLIA: Not me. I don't want to go to the tropics. All those flowers.

OLD MAN: But Rosa could run into all kinds of trouble. I don't know if it's a good idea for her to fly solo.

ROSA: I've been on my own now for seven years. I can handle myself.

CAMELLIA: Why don't you go on a cruise? There would be lots of people on a boat.

ROSA: Because I'm not going to meet people. I'm going for the plants. (Pause.) By the way, did you get my letter?

CAMELLIA: You could have asked me for the money in person, you know.

ROSA: You don't know what it's like to ask for money.

CAMELLIA: But it's your money. I've just been holding it for you. You know that.

ROSA: It's not money I've earned.

CAMELLIA: Well, not technically. But Grandpa left it for you.

ROSA: So it's Geordie's.

CAMELLIA: No, it's yours, Grandma. (Pause.) But I can't let you have it.

ROSA: But you just said it's mine!

CAMELLIA: (To OLD MAN) Is there more where this came from?

OLD MAN: Sure, Cammy. Be right back.

OLD MAN exits.

ROSA: Why won't you give it to me?

CAMELLIA: It's too much money.

ROSA: I'll do what I want with my money.

CAMELLIA: You don't need that much for a holiday.

ROSA: It's going to be a long trip.

CAMELLIA: Even if you went for a whole winter it wouldn't cost that much.

ROSA: It's for the rest of my winters! I want to spend them all in the sun!

CAMELLIA: A winter place. Sounds great. I wish I could say yes.

ROSA: Why can't you?

CAMELLIA: I put all that money into leasehold improvements this year. I just don't have it.

ROSA: (Pause.) I can give you until September.

CAMELLIA: September! That's just months away. Why do you need all that money? Are you planning to buy the whole island?

ROSA: I want to plant a tropical garden.

CAMELLIA: You mean you want to go study tropical plants. Maybe we can find you a botanical tour. Maybe through the university. . .

ROSA: I don't want a tour or a cruise! I'm moving!

CAMELLIA: You want to move? But you've lived in this house for almost fifty years!

ROSA: About time for a change.

CAMELLIA: You want to leave everything and go swelter on some island?

ROSA: I will bask, not swelter.

CAMELLIA: I could understand if you wanted to get away for the winter, but you can't go for good.

ROSA: Why not?

CAMELLIA: Because I can't give you the money. I don't have it! So you can't!

ROSA: As soon as you can give it to me, I'll go!

CAMELLIA: You can't go. Not like Mama did!

ROSA: Not quite. I'll send you my address. You can telephone me. I will write to you, and send you pictures. You can visit me. Don't try to make this into what your Mama did. It's not a disappearing act! I'm simply moving.

CAMELLIA: But you're too. . .

ROSA: Old?

CAMELLIA: You'll be alone! At least here you have me to look in on you.

ROSA: Not for long, I'll bet. Pretty soon you're going to find yourself a long-term accountant and you won't have time for me anymore.

CAMELLIA: Don't hold your breath.

ROSA: And Daisy's graduating this year. She's on her way.

CAMELLIA: (Pause.) Has she given you a date for the graduation ceremony?

ROSA: Not yet. I haven't heard from her in months. You know how she is. Surely we are invited to her graduation.

CAMELLIA: I better be. I paid for her degree.

ROSA: I don't like to bother her during final exams.

CAMELLIA: I'll do that. She's got to help me talk you out of this.

OLD MAN enters.

OLD MAN: Here's your wine, Cammy.

CAMELLIA: Oh, Old Man, I've got to go.

OLD MAN: Got a date?

CAMELLIA: Meeting with my accountant.

ROSA: On a Sunday?

CAMELLIA: Only time I can see him. But we're not finished this conversation. You can't move a million miles away. It's crazy! Can you understand this, Old Man? Why would anyone move her whole life for a bunch of plants?

OLD MAN: I'm better with trees, myself.

CAMELLIA: Uugh.

CAMELLIA exits.

ROSA: (Pause.) Sometimes I think of you as a tree.

OLD MAN: You do? You think about me, Rosa? But I'm a tree?

ROSA: I have these dreams, Old Man.

OLD MAN: You dream about me?

ROSA: But it's like a little heap of dust falling from the window when you open it for the first time in the spring. It gets blown away by the fresh spring air so quickly you hardly knew it was there.

OLD MAN: (Stretches out his arms, puffs out his chest.) But I'm there, a tall tree standing over you in the rain . . .

ROSA: (She adjusts his posture.) Actually, you're a bit stooped, and weather-beaten, and a little leaf-eaten, but well pruned.

OLD MAN: What kind of a tree?

ROSA: I didn't notice.

OLD MAN: You don't remember?

ROSA: I'll try to look closer next time, and I'll let you know.

OLD MAN: If I was a tree, I'd be an oak. The king of trees.

ROSA: In my dream, I'm a bird.

OLD MAN: What kind of bird?

ROSA: The bird keeps changing, from a robin to some flagrant tropical thing, and then back to a robin again.

OLD MAN: Hell of a bird.

ROSA: There's a nest in your tree.

OLD MAN: Your nest?

ROSA: No. It's been left there. Abandoned. I keep on circling around it, trying to land, landing, taking off again, but I never get past that in the dream.

OLD MAN: So you're a bird and I'm the tree you come back to. Does this mean you love me, Rosa?

ROSA: It's just a dream.

OLD MAN: If I were a tree, and you were a bird, we'd at least be very good friends.

ROSA: We are good friends. Ever since Geordie and I moved here next door to you.

OLD MAN: Ever since my wife took off. I would have despaired without you, Rosa.

ROSA: Oh, all I did was play cards with you. And put you to work to get your mind off it.

OLD MAN: Yeah, it. Didn't care about my wife after that; may she rot in hell. (Pause.) But . . . it. I'll never know if the child was mine, or whether she ever had it, or what.

ROSA: At least you know she didn't surrender her child.

OLD MAN: Don't know that.

ROSA: She took it with her, didn't she? Not like my daughter.

OLD MAN: At least your daughter ran off with her husband.

ROSA: But she left her two little girls!

OLD MAN: In strong, warm, loving hands. (He holds her hands.) A gardener's hands.

ROSA: (Pause.) With lots of work to do. My last season with my old garden.

OLD MAN: It's a fine garden. Hardly a patch of space that isn't crammed with plants. All poking up, hoping they'll catch your eye, so you'll bend down and touch them. (Pause.) Don't see why you need to go off and make a new garden.

ROSA: I've got a basket full of seeds to put in yet. And those bushes there . . . you're going to have to do something about them. They're shading my tulips!

OLD MAN: You're right. Nope, don't think you can leave this garden, Rosa. Too much to do! Now, where in creation did I leave my shears? (Exits.)

SCENE THREE

MUSIC from the OLD MAN's radio. ROSA is working in her garden a few days later. The OLD MAN is busy in his yard with saw, hammer and nails. DAISY enters with CAMELLIA.

DAISY: Grandma?

ROSA: (Startled.) Oh, Daisy!

CAMELLIA: Hi, Grandma.

ROSA: Camellia! My two girls together. (Hugs them both.)

CAMELLIA: We came to talk you out of this move.

ROSA: Well, won't you have some tea while you're at it?

DAISY: No, thanks. I only drink herbal tea now.

ROSA: We can pick some fresh mint. There's some down here by the shed.

DAISY: (Notices OLD MAN in vicinity, who gestures hello.) No, thanks, really. Please.

ROSA: Sit down, dear. Are you alright?

DAISY: I'm fine. But I'm wondering about you. You've never wanted to go anywhere before. I remember Mama and Dad couldn't even get you to go away for the weekend. You wouldn't leave your garden, you said.

ROSA: I couldn't leave your Grandpa, or the garden. But now . . . I'm ready to go.

DAISY: But Cam said you want to move. Really move!

ROSA: If I'd known it would get you two talking, I would have told you long ago.

DAISY: You've had a . . . secret desire all along?

ROSA: You know how I always complain about the winter.

CAMELLIA: Everyone does.

DAISY: Yeah!

ROSA: I can't grow the plants I want because they can't survive here.

CAMELLIA: That's why I'm in business.

DAISY: You could build a greenhouse. Use solar energy! You could grow anything you wanted all year round.

ROSA: No, I've never liked greenhouses. The air feels too artificial. Kind of like. . .

CAMELLIA: A flower shop.

DAISY: But you've lived here all your life. You're used to the winter.

ROSA: When you get old, you want the sun, even more than when you are young. You need it.

CAMELLIA: So take a winter holiday. You don't need to move.

ROSA: I want to move.

DAISY: But why an island? It's like you were going to the . . . underworld.

ROSA: It just seemed right. To be surrounded by the sea.

DAISY: But you've always . . . been here.

ROSA: I'm not going to be here forever, no matter where I live. As if it would make a great difference to either of you.

DAISY: It does! (Pause.) Oh, Grandma. I'm sorry. I haven't been around much, I know. I've just been so involved with school.

CAMELLIA: Seven years of it.

ROSA: Do you have a boyfriend?

DAISY: Yeah, I . . . do.

ROSA: That explains everything. Studying and romancing take up all your time! I understand. But you've got to understand that it won't make any difference to you when I'm gone. You'll be just as busy with your books and your boyfriend! Look at Camellia. She doesn't even have a boyfriend, but she's too swamped to have tea with me on Sundays!

CAMELLIA: Grandma. O.K.! So I slept a few Sunday afternoons! Don't make me feel like I've. . . missed church!

ROSA: I'd like to meet your boyfriend. Bring him over next Sunday.

DAISY: (Pause.) Sure.

ROSA: So what's his name?

DAISY: Brock.

CAMELLIA: Brock. Must be a jock.

ROSA: Brock. Sounds like rock. A rock in my garden.

DAISY: He's in law.

ROSA: A lawyer?

CAMELLIA: Big deal. So he's been in school just as long as you.

ROSA: Camellia, I'll expect you, too. It's not very often that your sister brings a friend over to meet her family.

CAMELLIA: It's not often that she comes over, period. When was the last time, Christmas?

DAISY: I was hoping that, now I've . . . finished school, I could come over more often.

CAMELLIA: What do you mean, "more often," Daisy? I had to convince you to spare the time today. If I hadn't told you that Grandma wanted to go tropical, you wouldn't have come at all!

ROSA: Oh.

DAISY: Things have changed.

CAMELLIA: Not for me. I've always felt responsible for you, Grandma. I don't think it's right for a woman of your age to go, all alone, to a tiny island, cut off from everywhere, when. . .

ROSA: When what?

CAMELLIA: When we need you.

ROSA: You don't need me.

CAMELLIA: Sure we do. Daisy's about to go through the post-graduate stress of finding a job, and I've got to do something about myself. . .

DAISY: You need to restructure your lifestyle. I bet you subsist on junk food. Are you on pills, Cam?

CAMELLIA: Are you finished?

DAISY: I bet you're on the brink of a career crisis, too. You're a mess.

CAMELLIA: What a fancy way to put it. Yeah, I'm sick of my job.

ROSA: You just need some companionship. Why don't you go out for dinner with someone a few times each week? That way you would at least eat properly.

DAISY: You know, there are studies directly relating job performance to nutrition.

CAMELLIA: We're here to discuss Grandma, not my diet!

ROSA: I will not be "discussed."

DAISY: But Grandma, you're too . . .

ROSA: Old?

CAMELLIA: At your age . . .

ROSA: I'm sick of you talking about "my age." I'm not some curiosity just because I'm alert! I'm not going to dry up in the sun, or get washed away by the sea! I've finally decided to go, and I'm going. Even if it means selling my house, instead of leaving it for you two.

CAMELLIA: That's a laugh. Daisy and I could never live together.

DAISY: I know we could never eat together!

ROSA: Somehow you managed quite well until you grew up. If we can't even have tea together, you might just as well go home. Go on. I've got lots to do.

OLD MAN's hammering builds up momentum over the following lines.

CAMELLIA: I'm sorry, Grandma.

DAISY: Me too, Grandma.

ROSA: Don't "Grandma" me. I've made a home for you since you were little, even before your Mama . . . brought you here. Now I want to find a place I can keep my old bones warm, and you act like a couple of pigeons, swooping down and cooing at me, but picking at each other as if you didn't come from the same nest!

DAISY: Don't go. You're all we've got.

ROSA: Maybe some day you'll realize that you've got each other. You go. Go on, get out of here! Both of you.

CAMELLIA: Come on, Daisy.

DAISY: I can't! Grandma, you can't do this!

ROSA: Get going, Daisy, I've got work to do.

OLD MAN's hammering reaches a climax, and then abruptly stops so that the next line is delivered alone, and unquestionably heard by the OLD MAN.

DAISY: But I'm going to have a baby!

OLD MAN whistles at DAISY, leaves his work, and leans on the fence, listening, shaking his head before he goes back to his work.

CAMELLIA: (Laughs.) Nice try, Daisy.

ROSA: Daisy?

DAISY: I'm already four months' pregnant.

CAMELLIA: This is for real?

ROSA: Are you sure?

DAISY: Absolutely. Here, feel. Can you feel that little bulge? Just starting to pop. (ROSA feels right away; CAMELLIA is hesistant.)

ROSA: Our little Daisy is going to be a mother?

DAISY: Not so little . . .anymore. I didn't think this would happen so soon. . .

CAMELLIA: Obviously. So Brock's a lawyer. I didn't think law school and illegitimate children went together.

DAISY: Don't be so archaic, Cam.

ROSA: I'm looking forward to meeting Brock.

DAISY: Grandma, we're good friends.

CAMELLIA: That's an understatement.

ROSA: That's good. Being friends underneath everything else is a help.

CAMELLIA: So five more months makes your baby due in October. Grandma? You want to go in September?

ROSA: Oh, dear.

DAISY: So now you know why I need you, Grandma. I'm reading all the books, but you're the only person I know who's ever actually been through a delivery. . .

ROSA: Oh, I think it's changed a little since I had your mother.

CAMELLIA: Is Brock going in with you?

DAISY: In where?

CAMELLIA: The delivery room.

DAISY: I . . . haven't asked him that. . . . I'd rather we didn't discuss the baby next Sunday. Just let him get to know you first. O.K.?

ROSA: Whatever you say, dear.

CAMELLIA: It might be a difficult topic to avoid.

DAISY: Just do it.

CAMELLIA: O.K., O.K.

DAISY: Grandma, I've cleared the shelves at the library already. I've got all the psychology texts, and the language stimulation ones, and the infant activity manuals, but you're the only person I really know who's raised kids.

ROSA: Just your mother, and then you. And I never had the benefit of infant activity manuals. You remember how I did things.

DAISY: When we were kids, yes, but not babies. How would I know anything about babies?

ROSA: (Reminiscing.) I felt the same way when I was a young mother. But as soon as my baby was born, and I was with her all day long, everything my mother did for me

all came back and I just knew what to do. Like instinct. You'll see.

DAISY: I don't think that technique will work for me.

CAMELLIA: I don't think Mama used any techniques.

DAISY: She could have tried living with us.

ROSA: (Suddenly back to the present.) Don't think about her, Daisy. Your Mama didn't know what she was doing. You do. You've got an education.

CAMELLIA: But they didn't teach you about this at university, did they?

DAISY: Actually, I did take a developmental psychology course, but that was in my first year.

CAMELLIA: Oh, did you actually finish that one?

DAISY: Give it a rest, Cam.

CAMELLIA: Better dig out the textbook just to make sure you haven't forgotten anything. You're going to need all the help you can get.

DAISY: This baby and me, we're going to be great together.

ROSA: I'm sure you will. Next Sunday, we'll have dinner.

CAMELLIA: We'll talk about your trip again, Grandma.

ROSA: After dinner, if you like.

DAISY: (To ROSA.) I'll bring you all my questions.

ROSA: Bring Brock instead.

MUSIC. ROSA exits. OLD MAN enters as CAM and DAISY leave. CAM waves to him; DAISY avoids his stare. LIGHTS indicate time change.

SCENE FOUR

ROSA meets OLD MAN in the garden. It nears evening, the following Sunday. This time, ROSA does not go to her plants.

OLD MAN: What are you mopin' about?

ROSA: Just came out here to think.

OLD MAN: How was the dinner?

ROSA: My house is so full I can't hear the words in my head.

OLD MAN: Here, sit down. (Brings her chair.)

ROSA: This old chair you made me. (She rubs the wooden arms from time to time.)

OLD MAN: Good dinner?

ROSA: Lots of leftovers for you tomorrow night.

OLD MAN: Thank you for the invitation. (Pause.) Put my jacket on. It's getting cool.

ROSA: What about you?

OLD MAN: Hell, my wine will keep me warm. (Pause.) What's the matter, Rosa?

ROSA: Just when I make up my mind to leave all this, they land here, and they need me!

OLD MAN: We all need you. (Pause.) Oh, they're big girls now.

ROSA: No, they're not. They want me to be their Grandma, just like I was when they were growing up here with me, confused and motherless.

OLD MAN: They want you to be here in case they turf it. They want someone to pick them up again.

ROSA: They're too old for that nonsense. And so am I.

OLD MAN: Isn't that why you want to keep the house, in case your tropical garden gets too hot for you?

ROSA: No.

OLD MAN: You want to hold on to a safe place, too.

ROSA: The last thing I want to do is hide in a house. I just want a bigger, better, year-round garden.

OLD MAN: Daisy's baby is due in five months.

ROSA: How did you know?

OLD MAN: I heard from over the fence.

ROSA: You would.

OLD MAN: Proud to say there's nothing wrong with my hearing.

ROSA: Oh, I'd love to be here when that baby is born. To take care of a little one again.

OLD MAN: Babies have a way of attaching themselves to you. (Pause.) So do old men. (He stands, behind her chair.)

ROSA: And I would like to keep in touch with Camellia. She needs someone to find her . . . someone.

OLD MAN: How are you going to do that?

ROSA: Didn't you say the supermarket was a good place to meet people?

OLD MAN: The only guys at our supermarket even close to Cammy's age are the bag boys.

ROSA: I feel so helpless. But how can I leave them like this?

OLD MAN: Oh, no, Rosa. You're going. You can't let them stop you.

ROSA: But one of them has a child under her heart and the other's heart has turned to clay.

OLD MAN: None of this is your fault.

ROSA: At least I'd still have my old garden.

OLD MAN: Not in the winter. Every winter you get more and more twitterpated that the spring won't come again.

ROSA: I think it would be easier to die under the warm sun.

OLD MAN: You're not going there to die, Rosa, you're going there to live.

ROSA: It makes my hope die when I see the plants die. I don't think I can bear to see winter again.

OLD MAN: I've got it! Tell them that you've got an acute medical problem, and that you have to move on doctor's strict orders.

ROSA: That's dishonest.

OLD MAN: They expect you to be here and help them out. That's not so hot, either.

ROSA: They sound like their mother used to. She just assumed that I would be here and adopt her children.

OLD MAN: All I know is that you've never been happier since you decided to fly south and plant your wonder garden. Huge vegetables and fruit, you said. Exaggeration of color. . .

ROSA: An abundance of color and motion and fragrance. For when I am an old bird woman, pecking at the ground. For my old age.

OLD MAN: For you. Who cares how old you are. How old are you, anyway?

ROSA: I'll stop counting if I ever find my garden.

OLD MAN: You will.

ROSA: I thought you wanted a card partner.

OLD MAN: If you stayed, you'd be like a bird in a cage. You'd probably take to drink, like me.

ROSA: Never.

OLD MAN: It happens. Look at me: unlucky in love, loser in the lottery. . . besides, I'm a bad influence.

ROSA: Not so bad.

OLD MAN: You've got to be like that plucky robin up there. Lands herself on a ladder and doesn't look down. It was a risk, she must have known that. But she took it. And look how nice and level the top step is up there, and completely hidden with that big bough hanging over.

ROSA: But that robin's got children to take care of.

OLD MAN: You only had one. (Pause.) And she flew away long ago.

ROSA: You know, this garden chair you made me is my favorite chair to sit in. I was hoping to take it with me.

OLD MAN: I made something else for you to take with you.

ROSA: If I ever go.

OLD MAN: (Gets birdhouse.) It's not for any flaming tropical bird. It's for an ordinary bird from an ordinary place like here that has to fly South for the winter. To remind you of. . . home. (Gives it to her.)

ROSA: It will remind me of you.

DAISY, BROCK, and CAMELLIA come out to the garden where ROSA and the OLD MAN sit.

DAISY: (Calling, offstage.) Grandma. Brock is here!

OLD MAN: He finally shows up? After dinner?

ROSA: At least he got here.

OLD MAN: (To Rosa.) So is this the fella?

DAISY: Grandma, this is Brock.

ROSA: I'm very pleased that you could come after all.

BROCK: I'm sorry I couldn't make it in time for dinner. I had to chair a strategy meeting, and I couldn't miss it.

CAMELLIA: Which group?

BROCK: The Campus Disarmament Crusade. We've been planning a major rally for months, and it happens tomorrow.

ROSA: Really? Can anyone march?

BROCK: Oh sure. (Pulls handbills from his knapsack and passes them out.) You're all welcome to join in, anywhere along the route marked by the dotted line. (To OLD MAN.) Hi there, the name's Brock. I don't believe we've met.

DAISY: Oh,. . . uh. . . this is the Old Man.

ROSA: He lives next door.

CAMELLIA: (Reading handbill) Are you up to this, Old Man?

BROCK: Oh. . . hi.

OLD MAN: No thanks, all the same. I'm not much of a marcher.

BROCK: Well, maybe you can watch us on T.V. We're hoping to get lots of news coverage.

CAMELLIA: (Looking at her watch.) Look, Brock, I was hoping to go over some shop business with Grandma and Daisy tonight. It has to do with her trip.

BROCK: You mean her move. Daisy told me. I've gotta say that you are amazing, Rosa. I hope I can call you Rosa.

ROSA: Thank you. You may.

BROCK: What a plan! What a grandmother!

DAISY: It's O.K., Cam. Brock can decipher all your shop talk for me.

BROCK: (Joking, arm around DAISY.) I'm her legal aid.

OLD MAN: Humph! Shop talk. (He stays within earshot for the rest of this scene, but putters around near the shed.)

DAISY: Business is not my field.

CAMELLIA: Must have been the only one you missed.

DAISY: Almost.

CAMELLIA: Well, it's O.K. with me. Grandma?

ROSA: We don't have to do this out here. We can go inside if you want.

BROCK: Sometimes business meetings are best when they're informal like this, out in the open air. (Gets chairs for everybody.)

OLD MAN: Open air?

CAMELLIA. Right. Well let's get on with it. I've decided that, since Grandma needs a bunch of money to move away to a tropical island, and I need to restructure my lifestyle, as Daisy puts it, that the best thing to do with the business right now is sell it.

ROSA: Sell it?

DAISY: No way!

ROSA: I won't allow it!

CAMELLIA: Legally, Grandma, I can do it even if you disagree.

DAISY: Did you hear that, Brock? You can't sell Grandpa's shop, Cam! Brock, take this down!

BROCK whips out notepad from pack.

DAISY: Brock, she can't! Grandpa didn't want us to sell it, ever!

ROSA: You really don't want to sell it to some stranger!

CAMELLIA: Yes, I do.

DAISY: Grandpa's heart would break in pieces if he could hear you.

CAMELLIA: Well, he's not going to know about it, is he? Because we're not going to tell him, are we?

DAISY: How can you talk about him like that? As if he was a little child you were hiding something from!

ROSA rises, goes to birdhouse OLD MAN gave her.

CAMELLIA: Give me one valid practical reason why I shouldn't sell it.

DAISY: Grandma and I depend on that shop for our income! I'm an unemployed student, and Grandma's a senior citizen.

CAMELLIA: You're an unemployed graduate. So you'll get a job. That's what people do when they finish school. (Pause, looking at BROCK.) Or you could become a dependent on somebody's income tax form.

BROCK: (Does not look up at this statement until he realizes everyone is watching him.) Excuse me, but Rosa and Daisy would receive some sort of settlement from the sale, would they not?

CAMELLIA: Rosa would. But not Daisy.

DAISY: What?

CAMELLIA: Grandpa made me promise him that I'd make sure you got through university. You got all expenses paid, with a monthly allowance, for seven years.

BROCK: May I ask a few questions about the division of shares?

CAMELLIA: No, you may not. This is a private business.

OLD MAN: (To CAM.) You tell him, Cammy.

ROSA: You don't have to sell the shop because of me. I'll sell the house. You both made it perfectly clear that you don't want it anyway.

CAMELLIA: Keep your house. You may want to come back and . . . see your greatgrandchildren some day.

OLD MAN: Cammy, if you had kids, maybe she wouldn't go at all.

ROSA: That's very thoughtful of you, but I do not want to sell the shop.

CAMELLIA: Why not?

ROSA: Because the shop was Geordie's life. (Pause.) Instead of selling the shop, I'll take everything I have here, dig it up and turn it under.

CAMELLIA: There's no need. Just sign here.

ROSA: I'd rather give up my garden and my house than Geordie's shop.

BROCK: (To CAM) I thought you didn't need anyone's consent.

CAMELLIA: (Sighs.) I don't. Getting around Grandpa's last will and testament will be very easy.

DAISY: But Cam, Grandpa always said that the shop was for us and our children.

ROSA: And their children.

BROCK: Excuse me, Rosa. She does need your signature. I'd advise you not to sign at this time.

DAISY: Grandma's not signing anything.

CAMELLIA: It doesn't really matter to you anymore, Daisy. Your allowance is gone.

DAISY: What? You can't do that! Brock, she can't do that, can she?

BROCK: Well, if the money is in a trust . . .

CAMELLIA: Hot shot.

DAISY: Cam, I thought the shop was your thing! You've been working there for as long as I can remember. Grandpa meant it for you.

CAMELLIA: Just like he meant university for you.

ROSA: "What you know is just like flowers," he said. "It's always there, like the seeds or bulbs in the ground even when the blossoms are gone."

BROCK: Wow, that's like what my mother told me . . .

CAMELLIA: Who asked you?

BROCK: . . . before she . . . died.

CAMELLIA: I'm sorry.

BROCK: Hey, it's O.K. Go on.

CAMELLIA: You got the education, Daisy, and I got the real flowers . . . the ones you have to sell before they wilt and go brown and . . . die.

DAISY: That was your choice.

CAMELLIA: No. It was his.

BROCK: Hey, if you still want to go to university, you could try night school. I've got a calendar somewhere here in my pack.

CAMELLIA: Where did you find this guy, the audio-visual department?

ROSA: Tell me why you want to get out of the shop.

CAMELLIA: Because I look like this.

ROSA: You're young! You've got nothing to complain about.

CAMELLIA: I'm burnt out, Grandma.

DAISY: Maybe it's the seven-year itch.

BROCK: I bet Daisy could fix you up a diet and exercise plan. Make you feel brand new. She's a holistic whiz.

CAMELLIA: I feel like I'm covered with mulch, like that bed over there. I'm sick of flowers. I can hardly breathe anymore. I can't stand the smell.

BROCK: I know what you mean. I'm allergic to certain kinds of flowers, and when I have an attack, wow, my eyes run and my sinuses get all blocked up. It's the pits.

CAMELLIA: Yeah.

ROSA: (Pause.) But you've thrived there, building up the shop to what it is now.

CAMELLIA: How would you know? You haven't been there in years.

ROSA: It still hurts for me to go there. Without Geordie.

CAMELLIA: You were right, Old Man. It's time to unmarry myself to that shop, and the only way to do that is to sell it.

ROSA: Don't listen to *him!*

OLD MAN: I didn't mean it that way, Cammy.

DAISY: You can't sell it.

CAMELLIA: Do you want it? Maybe it's your turn!

DAISY: My turn?

CAMELLIA: If I didn't sell, I'd leave it anyway. I've got to get away from here.

DAISY: You?

ROSA: Oh, Camellia.

OLD MAN: Where do you want to go, Cammy? You've been at the shop ever since you were old enough to run a cash register.

CAMELLIA: I'm looking at some land up North.

DAISY: Up North?!

OLD MAN: Not too many flowers up that way.

BROCK: Land of opportunities.

CAMELLIA: If Grandma can go, so can I.

ROSA: (Pause.) You've got your own land?

CAMELLIA: It's not mine yet. But it will be, as soon as I sell my condo. I can hardly wait to get out of the city!

BROCK: Right on!

CAMELLIA: (Surprised.) Thanks. (Checks watch.) I've got to get going. Meeting my real estate agent.

DAISY: I don't believe this. You're going south like a . . . bird, and you're going north like . . .the wind!

OLD MAN: Whereabouts, Cammy?

CAMELLIA: It's just a little acreage, about three hours' drive north. Look, I've got to go. I'll come back later to pick these up, signed.

DAISY: Not if I can help it.

OLD MAN: You're giving up a swinging single's condo for a homestead?

CAMELLIA: Right again, Old Man. I better get going.

OLD MAN: A cabin in the woods, and a big dog, and a Mountie.

CAMELLIA: A Mountie?

OLD MAN: They're nice fellas.

CAMELLIA: And I wouldn't want a big dog. Maybe some sheep.

BROCK: I've heard they're cheap to keep.

CAMELLIA: And maybe a dairy cow to talk to every morning. I need a good girlfriend.

ROSA: A cow! I never gave you that idea.

OLD MAN: Cammy wants to be a cowgirl?

DAISY: If you don't like the smell of flowers, you're not going to like the smell of cows!

ROSA: (To CAM) You've always been such a sensible person. How can you just leave everything behind you?

OLD MAN: Good question.

CAMELLIA: Maybe I'm just a late bloomer!

CAMELLIA exits. ROSA takes DAISY into the house. BROCK sees the OLD MAN with a heavy bundle of branches, and goes to help ~~him.~~

BROCK: Let me give you a hand with that, Old Man.

OLD MAN: I can manage.

BROCK: Let me. I'm used to this. I lift weights. (Carries it offstage.)

OLD MAN: He lifts weights.

BROCK: (Returns.) Trees are sure in good shape. Nice job you did there.

OLD MAN: Got 'em all done except for the apple tree.

BROCK: Can I put the ladder away for you?

OLD MAN: No! Don't. There's a nest in it.

BROCK: No kidding. Why don't you just move the nest?

OLD MAN: The mother would abandon it.

BROCK: I didn't know that.

OLD MAN: Rosa would cry for her.

BROCK: (Goes up for a look; bird sounds.) Can't get close enough. That mother's not letting anybody in.

OLD MAN: She's lost her mate, I think.

BROCK: Wish I had my binoculars. (Comes down.)

OLD MAN: She lets Rosa get pretty close. Rosa talks to her when she's out here working.

BROCK: Rosa's an amazing woman.

OLD MAN: Yup.

BROCK: Daisy's told me all about her. She didn't mention you, though.

OLD MAN: Rosa and I have known each other forever.

BROCK: Daisy talks about Geordie sometimes. He must have been quite a guy.

OLD MAN: Oh, sure. He and Daisy were a pair. Every night when he came home, he'd bring that little girl a flower from his shop. Never missed a day. Trouble was, it hurt Cammy like hell. Geordie always thought of Daisy as the little one; she was only six when they came to live with Rosa. And Cammy was twelve. . . I always tried to get Cammy busy with something over at my place when Geordie came home. (Pause.) So she'd feel special, too.

BROCK: Sounds like you were around quite a bit.

OLD MAN: Oh, sure. I worked my trade out of my woodshop there in the back. Rosa and Daisy and Cammy and me. . . we were like a little family.

BROCK: What about Geordie?

OLD MAN: Well, let's just say I pitched in for him, eh? (Pause.) So you're going to be a lawyer, eh? (To himself.) Sure got the nose for it.

BROCK: Yeah, I finished school this year.

OLD MAN: How did you do?

BROCK: Oh, pretty well, I guess. (Pause.) Top five percent.

OLD MAN: So you got a job yet?

BROCK: Had one lined up for a long time.

OLD MAN: Your father a lawyer, too?

BROCK: I've got articles with his firm. He's a senior partner.

OLD MAN: Made in the shade.

BROCK: Yeah. Especially with Daisy. She has such a fresh perspective on life. She's interested in new things, new ideas. It constantly amazes me how much she knows.

OLD MAN: (Snort.) She's had lots of time at the university to soak it up.

BROCK: We met at a peace rally. I knew when I started talking to her that we were destined to have a relationship.

OLD MAN: Peace rally, eh?

BROCK: Oh, yeah, I make time for all that stuff.

OLD MAN: Hey, ever hear anything about that. . . acidic rain?

BROCK: Acid rain. I was in a student debate on acid rain a few years ago.

OLD MAN: Hate it. Kills the trees.

BROCK: I do some work with trees, too. I like to get out into the . . .

OLD MAN: Open air.

BROCK: Yeah. I'm a volunteer with a reforestation group.

OLD MAN: No kidding. I'm kind of partial to trees. So what . . . do you do?

BROCK: We go out planting baby trees. Mostly pines, some spruce. Hey, if you're interested, I'll put you on our mailing list. Maybe you'd like to come out one day and help.

OLD MAN: An old guy like me?

BROCK: Sure. Wait a minute, I think I have our latest newsletter in my pack. Yeah, here it is. You can keep that. Call the number on the back if you want to go out planting. Sometimes we're gone for a whole weekend.

OLD MAN: Thanks. I'll read it over.

BROCK: Is that your place over there?

OLD MAN: Yup.

BROCK: Nice boat. All wood?

OLD MAN: Through and through. Not a flake of fiberglass on her.

BROCK: An original.

OLD MAN: Made it about . . . forty years ago.

BROCK: You make boats?

OLD MAN: Make anything you want out of wood. (Pause.) You like fishing?

BROCK: Yeah, I like fishing, certain species. But I don't believe in harvesting any other wildlife.

OLD MAN: Harvesting, eh? That mean you fish your limit?

BROCK: Well, I've never been close to going over. But I report people who think they're smart enough to haul in above their limit. They have no idea what they're doing to the environmental picture.

OLD MAN: So tell me, what's such an earnest fella like yourself doing in law?

BROCK: Actually, I'm hoping to specialize in nonprofit conservation groups.

OLD MAN: What does your father think about that?

BROCK: He's pretty tolerant. (Grins.) His partners aren't so keen.

OLD MAN: You're not expecting to make much money specializing in trees, seals and ducks. You ever think about going into politics?

BROCK: (Smiles.) I better go have a look at this deal Cam wants. (Exits with papers.)

SCENE FIVE

Another week has passed. OLD MAN checks the nest; the birds have flown. He prepares to start pruning. To do this he stands in the tree. He also sits in the tree to daydream. CAM and DAISY enter garden. They don't see OLD MAN.

CAMELLIA: So how are you feeling?

DAISY: I'm sick of being pregnant.

CAMELLIA: That didn't take long. But then . . . four and a half months is a long time for you to do anything.

DAISY: I've got four and a half months to go!

CAMELLIA: You can't take an incomplete in this course.

DAISY: Oh, it would help if I wasn't so broke.

CAMELLIA: Hey, I didn't mean to be so chippy last week. How much do you need? (Takes out her cheque book.)

DAISY: I need an income. I want my allowance back, Cam.

CAMELLIA: Look, I'll never let you starve. (Writes cheque.) But Grandpa only wanted you to get an education. I don't think he ever imagined it would take you seven years.

DAISY: That's not fair. I switched programs.

CAMELLIA: Yeah. How many times? Three? Four? Never mind. But now that you're graduating, it's over. That was the arrangement.

DAISY: (Sits.) I need that money, Cam. (Pause.) I'm not graduating.

CAMELLIA: (Withdraws cheque.) You're not? What happened?

DAISY: I dropped a few courses in March.

CAMELLIA: In your last term?

DAISY: I wasn't feeling well.

CAMELLIA: Don't tell me. You overdosed on vitamins and aerobics.

DAISY: I had morning sickness. (Pause.) All day.

CAMELLIA: So instead of a degree we're getting diapers. I worked for seven years so that you could have a baby?

DAISY: I worked for seven years, too. Theoretically.

CAMELLIA: Yeah. But you get the baby.

DAISY: It's yours, too, Cam. You'll be an aunt.

CAMELLIA: (Warming up.) Yeah, I will.

DAISY: Come on, you can't cut me off now.

CAMELLIA: I'll give you an extension on one condition. You've got at least four months left before the baby is born. Go to summer school and finish.

DAISY: No, thanks.

CAMELLIA: (Crumples up cheque.) Then forget it.

DAISY: Cam, don't be an ogre. I've got to eat.

CAMELLIA: Doesn't Brock know how to cook?

DAISY: I don't want to sponge off him.

CAMELLIA: But you'll sponge off me.

DAISY: I'm used to having my own money.

CAMELLIA: Cheques with my name on them.

DAISY: I'm not going to grovel.

CAMELLIA: Did you and Brock have a fight?

DAISY: Cam, I need that allowance.

CAMELLIA: Get a job, Daisy.

DAISY: I can't with a baby coming. Who's going to hire me?

CAMELLIA: The pregnant dropout.

DAISY: Thanks for the résumé.

CAMELLIA: You could take over the shop.

DAISY: Me? Oh, no.

CAMELLIA: You could do it!

DAISY: It's your thing, not mine. . . . I was thinking about making a film.

CAMELLIA: Oh, so you want to be a movie star. Like Mama wanted to be a cult queen.

DAISY: Not a movie star. A producer. Of a documentary.

CAMELLIA: What could you document?

DAISY: About being a mother, a single mother, by choice.

CAMELLIA: By choice?

DAISY: I planned it.

CAMELLIA: From the beginning?

DAISY: The conception.

CAMELLIA: You've got guts.

DAISY: (Looking at tummy.) Yeah.

CAMELLIA: You mean you picked Brock the jock out of a crowd of thousands of university students to be the father of your baby?

DAISY: He's what I wanted. He's brilliant, strong, concerned, passionate.

CAMELLIA: (Laughs.) And you talked him into being the one-minute father of your child? No wonder he's so smug.

DAISY: He doesn't know.

CAMELLIA: Oh yeah? (Sarcastically.) Is it a secret?

DAISY: Yeah. Except you're in on it.

CAMELLIA: (Pause.) You're starting to show. More than you did last week.

DAISY: Yeah, I put on three pounds in five days.

CAMELLIA: So what are you waiting for?

DAISY: I don't want to marry him.

CAMELLIA: So. You want to be P.O.S.S.L.Q?

DAISY: What?

CAMELLIA: You know. Persons of the Opposite Sex Sharing Living Quarters.

DAISY: No! I want to be a parent. I don't want to mate for life!

CAMELLIA: A lone parent? A parent without a partner?

DAISY: Hey, where did you get all the terminology?

CAMELLIA: I did learn how to read, you know. Before you were born.

DAISY: Sorry, I just didn't think you were aware of some of the alternatives available today.

CAMELLIA: How are you going to support your alternative?

DAISY: I was counting on my allowance. If I thought you would sell out on me, I never would have started this project.

CAMELLIA: Project! You mean the movie or the baby?

DAISY: The baby.

CAMELLIA: Don't tell me this is all research for a documentary!

DAISY: No, the idea for the film came after the baby.

CAMELLIA: But a baby! If you were counting on my money, then why didn't you ask me first?

DAISY: Oh, come on. You wouldn't have gone for it.

CAMELLIA: Would Brock have gone for it?

DAISY: Probably not.

CAMELLIA: You have to tell him. (Pause.) You are going to tell him, aren't you?

DAISY: No!

CAMELLIA: If you don't tell him, I will. I've got my own personal opinion of the guy, but he has to know. It's a baby, Daisy, not an undercapitalized . . . underground . . . undergraduate project!

CAM exits. OLD MAN is in tree; DAISY is under it. ROSA enters, prepares to plants bulbs. OLD MAN jumps down from tree.

DAISY: (Startled.) Oh! Don't do that!

OLD MAN: Sorry. Not so good at landing anymore.

DAISY: Didn't anybody ever tell you that it was rude to hide and listen?

OLD MAN: Wasn't hiding. I was up there first.

DAISY: But you're always . . . haunting in the trees!

OLD MAN: I like to be in the green space. When I'm up there, I get a sense of permanence. Trees go on forever, you know. Not like people.

DAISY: You scared me. (Shaken, she sits on swing.)

OLD MAN: Come on, let me give you a push, little girl. (He pushes her on swing.) Seems like I made this swing for you just the other day.

CAM enters. Sees DAISY and OLD MAN but goes to ROSA.

CAMELLIA: (Agitated.) Grandma, have you thought any more about the sale?

ROSA: A little.

CAMELLIA: Well?

ROSA: Sit down. Let the sun feel your face. There.

CAM sits, gradually relaxes. DAISY and OLD MAN see and hear ROSA and CAM and vice versa, but the two groups are physically separated on the stage.

DAISY: Why are you always here, in Grandma's garden?

CAMELLIA: It does feel good to sit in your garden. When you're here, working in it.

OLD MAN: I love it here.

CAMELLIA: Flowers actually smell O.K. when I'm outside.

OLD MAN: I love to watch Rosa.

DAISY: Not so fast. I'm feeling queasy.

OLD MAN: Sorry, I almost forgot.

ROSA: (Pause.) It's time to plant my wedding glads.

OLD MAN: A springtime ritual.

DAISY: To commemorate another ritual.

CAMELLIA: The ritual of rituals.

ROSA: It's not such a terrible ritual.

OLD MAN: Oh, marriage is for the birds.

ROSA: Is that what you think, Daisy?

DAISY: No! You and Grandpa had a wonderful marriage.

CAMELLIA: You and your white glads. Don't you ever get tired of white?

ROSA: Not at all. They remind me of my wedding day.

CAMELLIA: But there are such interesting new colors for glads: aubergine, terra cotta, fuschia.

ROSA: (Pause.) White is for a bride.

OLD MAN: So . . . you don't figure on marrying this fella Brock, do you?

DAISY: Well . . . no.

ROSA: Didn't he ask you yet?

DAISY: We haven't talked about it.

ROSA: (Pause.) When I was married, white was for brides and brides were virgins. Or . . . so everybody thought.

OLD MAN: If I can count right . . .

CAMELLIA: So weren't *you?*

ROSA: I had white flowers . . .

CAMELLIA: But did you and Grandpa. . .? Come on, did you?

OLD MAN: . . . Rosa and Geordie must have started out a little like this.

ROSA: . . . and a white dress. . .

DAISY: Grandpa was a sweet talker, wasn't he?

ROSA: . . . and a lovely white veil.

DAISY: But you were already pregnant with Mama?

ROSA: I was so much in love that I was already carrying a child with my wedding flowers.

CAMELLIA: Grandma!

OLD MAN: She was quite a girl.

DAISY: Wow. Grandma?

ROSA: Quit gawking at me and get the watering can. (Pause.) When Geordie and I were married, I remember it was a cool, crisp September morning. The taxi stopped at a corner, and there was this old woman, the oldest woman I had ever seen, stooping with her basket of flowers. They were glads. All white. Geordie leaped out of the taxi and bought them all. There were two dozen.

CAMELLIA: Two dozen! They must have dwarfed you.

ROSA: I felt like an angel, with those two bundles of flowers folded up in front of me, like wings. (Pause.) And that was the time your Grandpa picked to tell me that he had quit his job. On our way to be married.

DAISY: Bet your wings started to wilt.

ROSA: I was furious.

OLD MAN: (Laughs.) Sure pulled a fast one on her!

CAMELLIA: Was that when he told you about the shop?

ROSA: "Everyone loves flowers. Everyone buys flowers," he said. "I will open a flower shop. It will do well." But I don't think he had thought about it until that very moment.

CAMELLIA: So he started it . . . on a whim?

OLD MAN: Heh, heh, now they were even-steven.

DAISY: What do you mean?

OLD MAN: I think she did it on purpose, so he would marry her.

DAISY: (Jumps off swing.) How do you know that?

OLD MAN: Don't know for sure, but in those days, if a girl got pregnant, it was because she wanted to, even if there was no birth control!

ROSA: Since when are you an authority on pregnant women?

DAISY: You dirty old man.

CAMELLIA: You mean . . . what I thought was an epic dream was really just a streetcorner impulse?

ROSA must show CAMELLIA how she feels about Geordie. She does not pay.attention to DAISY and OLD MAN, knowing that DAISY defends her. OLD MAN is not trying to confront ROSA here, but DAISY.

ROSA: But he held on to it, Camellia. And I held on to him. (Pause.) I told him I had to have a garden, too. He said, "Just like a plant, we will grow in two directions. We will have a home, a garden, children, our roots. And we will have a shop, a business of our own, our branches. For our children's children. We will always share a love of flowers."

OLD MAN: Point is, here you are, getting yourself pregnant, just like your Grandma did. . .

DAISY: Shut up!

CAMELLIA: Maybe I missed a gene, but I don't even like flowers!

OLD MAN: She did it to get her man. . .

DAISY: Go away!

OLD MAN: But you don't even want yours!

ROSA: Oh, Geordie would be so proud to see how you've made his shop flourish.

CAMELLIA: You really shocked me when I saw you come in last week.

ROSA: You looked like you'd seen a ghost!

OLD MAN: Do you think a guy like that is just going to disappear?

DAISY: Why not?

CAMELLIA: I can't stay there anymore.

OLD MAN: Because he's sure sweet on you, that's why.

ROSA: But you're doing such a good job.

OLD MAN: You've got to tell him. He's got a right!

CAMELLIA: But I didn't ask for it! It was tossed to me . . . like a bridal bouquet!

DAISY: You've got no right to tell me anything!

CAMELLIA: So I was appointed! For what? To carry on somebody's romantic illusion of immortality?

ROSA: Maybe this restlessness is just some kind of mid-life crisis.

CAMELLIA: I haven't even started my life yet!

ROSA interrupts DAISY, asking for help. DAISY has something to learn from the following, but it is old news to OLD MAN. He keeps pestering DAISY, the only one who is listening to him.

ROSA: Isn't that what you said it's all about, Daisy?

DAISY: Cam's a classic case.

CAMELLIA: (Pause.) Oh, really? And you're the textbook? I can hardly wait to dump some ink in the margins! About Grandpa. When I took over, the shop was a wreck! Oh, sure, the arrangements in the window were pretty, but the account books were a mess! He didn't know anything about business!

OLD MAN: (To DAISY.) He's a nice guy!

CAMELLIA: Too nice! He gave flowers away every day! To every pretty girl who walked by the shop! Don't you remember, Daisy?

DAISY: Oh, Grandpa.

CAMELLIA: He was a hopeless businessman! That's why he worked so hard, Grandma! He was clinging to something he never should have got himself into! He would have lost it if it didn't kill him first!

ROSA: Oh, Geordie.

CAMELLIA: It killed him. And look what it's doing to me.

OLD MAN: You don't really want to be alone in your condition!

DAISY: This is none of your business.

CAMELLIA: Let go of it! I think I've found a buyer. Let's sell. You'll get a big chunk of money to take to the tropics.

ROSA: It's blood money.

OLD MAN: Daisy, it's his flesh and blood!

CAMELLIA: It's your money.

DAISY: Leave me alone!

ROSA: It's like selling Geordie's soul. If you sell, I can't take anything from the sale.

OLD MAN: You've got to say something, Daisy.

CAMELLIA: Let go of him.

ROSA: I can't!

DAISY: Stop telling me what to do!

ROSA: If you only had a love like Geordie.

CAMELLIA: But he's dead!

OLD MAN: It's a new life!

ROSA: It doesn't change what I feel!

DAISY: Go away!

CAMELLIA: I'm going to sell.

OLD MAN: You'd better hurry up before it's too late, and he finds out from someone else.

DAISY: Get away from here! You've not my father, or my grandfather! You're not anybody!

ROSA: If you sell the shop, then after I'm gone, there will be nothing of Geordie left on this earth. (Pause. She is almost desperately working the soil now.) I've got to finish putting in these bulbs.

CAMELLIA and DAISY exit in opposite directions.

SCENE SIX

ROSA planting a few days later. The OLD MAN lies in his lounge chair on his side of the fence. MUSIC, LIGHTS to indicate time change. BROCK enters.

BROCK: (Depressed.) Rosa, I hope I'm not bothering you.

ROSA: Oh, Brock. Here, give me a hand. (He helps her up.) Where's Daisy?

BROCK: I thought maybe you knew. I haven't seen her for a week.

ROSA: A week? What happened?

BROCK: She suddenly told me she didn't want to see me anymore. Then she just ran. Didn't even give me a chance to ask why. I'm still in total shock.

ROSA: Oh, Brock!

OLD MAN: (Waking.) Did I hear Brock over there?

ROSA: You better come over right away.

BROCK: Daisy's left me, Old Man. I can't believe it.

ROSA: Let me make some tea.

OLD MAN: Hell, he doesn't need tea, woman. (Fishes out wine jar.) Have a good swig, my boy.

BROCK: Thanks. Maybe we could have tea another time, Rosa.

OLD MAN: You're not the first one, you know.

BROCK: You mean she's done this before?

OLD MAN: No, I mean it's happened to other men, just as good as yourself.

BROCK: You, too?

OLD MAN: My wife. A real kick in the pants. My sympathies.

BROCK: I just can't believe it.

OLD MAN: Yeah, and you just think about what she took with her.

BROCK: She didn't take anything! And she hasn't been back to pick up her books and stuff she left at my place.

OLD MAN: Oh, she took something all right.

BROCK: I just wish I knew what was wrong.

ROSA: Look at you two, wallowing in self pity and wine. It's probably nothing.

OLD MAN: Nah. Just a prenatal mood swing.

BROCK: Prenatal?

ROSA: That's what Daisy calls them. I think I had them, too. I know her Mama did.

OLD MAN: It's in the genes.

BROCK: Genes?

OLD MAN: Yeah, you know those little guys with the long tails? They've got your genes. And she's run off with them!

BROCK: You mean. . . she's pregnant?

ROSA: She didn't tell you?

BROCK: No! I don't. . . no! She didn't! She's going to have a baby?

OLD MAN: Your baby. At least you know it's yours.

BROCK: I think. . . so.

ROSA: Oh, Brock. I can't understand . . . why she didn't . . . We've known for weeks!

OLD MAN: Maybe she's scared.

BROCK: Of course she's scared. I'm terrified. God, a baby?

OLD MAN: Maybe that's why she took off.

BROCK: That's it. She was too terrified to tell me. She didn't want to complicate our relationship.

OLD MAN: Makes you a daddy.

BROCK: But she would have to tell me, sooner or later, no matter what. You can't conceal someone's offspring.

OLD MAN: Sort of like kidnapping.

BROCK: Have you got more of that? I'm going to be a father.

OLD MAN: You better get hold of the mother before you get too excited about it. (Pours wine.)

BROCK: I've been looking forward to this moment for a long time.

OLD MAN: Oh yeah?

BROCK: I was an only child. I promised myself I would never let my son grow up alone, if I could help it.

OLD MAN: One thing at a time, boy. You've got to get hold of the mother.

DAISY enters.

BROCK: Daisy!

DAISY: Oh no! What are you doing here?

BROCK: Why didn't you tell me about the baby!

DAISY: (Stiffly.) Who told you?

BROCK: The Old Man!

DAISY: You bastard!

OLD MAN: Huh!

ROSA: But Daisy, I thought he knew! Why would you try to hide this from anyone, especially Brock?

DAISY: Now everything's ruined.

BROCK: Wait a minute, Daisy. We can pick it up. Just erase what you said before. I'm thrilled about it, I really am.

DAISY: (Confused.) You are? Oh, no!

BROCK: We were ready to move in together, anyway.

DAISY: I don't think so.

BROCK: Daisy, listen, I know all about your prenatal mood swings. Rosa told me.

DAISY: He wasn't supposed to know.

ROSA: But why?

OLD MAN: Maybe it's not your baby.

BROCK: Of course it is. My baby. Daisy?

DAISY: This was not supposed to happen.

BROCK: Is it?

DAISY: I didn't want you to know!

ROSA: Why?

BROCK: Is it my baby?

DAISY: It's mine!

BROCK: Am I the father! Daisy!

DAISY: What if you weren't? Would you go away?

BROCK: But I am.

DAISY: You're not going to go away.

BROCK: It is mine!

DAISY: It's not anyone else's.

BROCK: (Pause.) Obviously, we weren't very careful.

DAISY: No! It was a conscious. . . conception.

ROSA: (Surprised.) Daisy!

OLD MAN: More like an immasculate conception.

BROCK: What?

DAISY: This is not a mistake.

BROCK: You wanted a baby? Why didn't you tell me?

DAISY: I wanted you to be free of any responsibility.

BROCK: But why not tell me after it happened?

DAISY: Because we weren't planning to stay together.

BROCK: How do you know?

DAISY: It wasn't supposed to be like this.

BROCK: I get it. You used me.

DAISY: I just took something that you gave out for free.

BROCK: You mean that's all you ever wanted from me?

DAISY: Yes! At first. But then, we got along so well, and. . . I never should have let things go this far.

BROCK: But we had a mature understanding about birth control. I made sure of it. You lied about that?

DAISY: It's been done before.

BROCK: Yeah, in the middle ages. I thought you were a little more advanced.

DAISY: You don't understand. This baby is for me.

BROCK: Begotten by me!

DAISY: Don't get biblical!

BROCK: You lied to me!

DAISY: I'm sorry.

BROCK: But why?

DAISY: Because I want this.

BROCK: Just because you want something, you don't go out and steal for it!

DAISY: I need a baby. . . to hold me in place.

BROCK: What are you talking about?

DAISY: I can't stick with anything, Brock! I keep running into new things, and getting sidetracked. I join new groups, but I can't make a commitment to any of them!

BROCK: Hold it. You finished school.

DAISY: No! I didn't! I dropped out as soon as I knew for sure.

BROCK: You're kidding.

ROSA: Oh, Daisy.

OLD MAN: Typical.

DAISY: I need a focus. (Pause.) The baby.

BROCK: (Pause.) You and I were pretty tight. You didn't get tired of me. Daisy?

DAISY: No. I shouldn't have let us get that close.

BROCK: Look, I'm not a course you take, or a service club! I'm a person! You don't just get tired of someone you love! What about your family? You don't run away from them!

DAISY: They're running away from me!

ROSA: Not because of you!

DAISY: Just like Mama. (Pause.) But I don't want to! I don't want to run away! The baby. . . will make me stay.

BROCK: The baby's got a father. I'm not running away.

DAISY: I don't want a father.

BROCK: What?

ROSA: But why, Daisy?

DAISY: Because I don't trust fathers! Fathers have too much power, at least mine did. To convince Mama to drop Cam and me on your doorstep.

BROCK: Look, I'm not letting anybody drop our child anywhere. (Pause.) I can understand if you're saying that just to spare me in case I feel any obligation to. . .

DAISY: I don't want to marry you or anybody! Is that clear? I don't want. . . a father for my child.

BROCK: Wait a minute. That child, and every child, has a father, whether you want one or not.

DAISY: I don't want one. We're going to be a mother and child pair. (Pause.) Like in the wild.

OLD MAN: It's a jungle out there.

BROCK: I could fight you on this.

DAISY: I knew you'd do this if you found out. Take up paternal custody over unborn children as another one of your pet causes. Take it as far as you can to test out the legal system.

BROCK: No, this is different.

DAISY: You don't want a child. You want another exercise in bucking the establishment.

BROCK: I'd never think of a child that way. Especially my own.

DAISY: It's not yours, Brock. It's mine!

OLD MAN: Sounds like divorce in utero.

ROSA: Daisy. You can't have a child all alone, with no money to support yourself.

DAISY: I can stay with you, can't I?

ROSA: First tell me why you did this.

DAISY: I told you. I need a focus. Like you have your plants.

ROSA: Give me the green truth.

DAISY: (Pause.) I wanted to know that I would never be alone.

ROSA: But you have your sister and me.

DAISY: You can hardly wait to get rid of me. The minute you think I've graduated, you're both taking off!

ROSA: We both thought that when you were . . . finished with university, you'd be on your way.

DAISY: I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to stay in one place and have my baby. But I need you to help me, so that I can go to work. I have to make some money.

BROCK: Let me help you.

DAISY: No, Brock. I started this alone, and I'm going through with it.

OLD MAN: Here we go again.

BROCK: You didn't start it alone!

ROSA: Oh, Daisy. I love my granddaughters even more than . . . my own. And for my greatgrandchild I'd like to be a tall evergreen standing forever. Your baby needs a home. (Pause.) You are welcome to live here.

OLD MAN: Rosa, are you sure?

DAISY: Oh, Grandma. We'll have a lot of fun together! I knew you would change your mind. It will be perfect. You and me and baby, here in this big old house.

ROSA: You can have the house, but not me.

OLD MAN: Attagirl, Rosa.

ROSA: I'm still going. Even if I don't have the money I need to buy my tropical land.

DAISY: Good idea. Go on your holiday. You deserve one. But maybe you could do it fairly soon, so you'll be back in time before the baby is born. I'll fix up the baby room while you're away.

BROCK: I could help with the baby room.

ROSA: While you're at it, keep in mind that there's a garden out here that needs watering and weeding.

DAISY: Oh, it'll be alright for a few weeks.

OLD MAN: I'll make sure they take care of it. It will be just like you left it. For when you come back.

ROSA: I'm not coming back.

DAISY: Grandma?

ROSA: And there's also a shop. Started by your Grandpa for you. And for your children. If you want to live here, you'll have to take over the shop from Camellia.

DAISY: I can't. I've got no experience.

ROSA: You can learn. You've spent most of your life learning at school.

DAISY: But I've got a baby coming.

ROSA: You've got to feed your baby, so you'll have to go to work. It's better if you're the boss.

DAISY: But I can't leave my baby with anyone! Except family. And you're all leaving me!

BROCK: Not me.

OLD MAN: I'm here.

BROCK: I'm family.

ROSA: If you won't let Brock give you any money, then maybe he could give you some of his time.

BROCK: Well, sure, if she needs some help . . .

ROSA: Why don't you and Brock arrange childcare duties between yourselves so you can work at the shop?

DAISY: Grandma, that's crazy.

BROCK: I'd like to get to know my son.

DAISY: I knew you'd say that! You think being father of a baby is being father of a son!

BROCK: Or daughter. I want to work it out.

DAISY: It's impossible! How many lawyers clock time with a baby?

OLD MAN: Your Dad sounds like a reasonable guy, Brock. Get a paternity leave, part time.

BROCK: It would give his partners ulcers! (Brightening.) I could try!

DAISY: Why does everybody think I need to be rescued?

ROSA: Because you've got no money and no where to live and you're going to have a baby.

BROCK: Daisy, what have you got to lose?

DAISY: My baby. (Pause.) And me.

BROCK: Come on, we're going to be great together.

ROSA: (Pause.) Brock could write up a contract.

DAISY: A contract?

BROCK: Rosa, you're a genius.

OLD MAN: That's my Rosa!

ROSA: Outline everything you expect from each other.

BROCK: A co-parenting contract.

DAISY: I'm going to be a co-parent?

BROCK: It's an ideal way to protect your interests, especially when there's so many unknowns.

DAISY: I'm the one taking the risk! I'm the one who should have control!

ROSA: And one thing more. If the baby is going to live here, then both its parents live here, too.

DAISY: What?

BROCK: Alright!

DAISY: You can't make me live with him!

OLD MAN: Be a change to have another man around here.

BROCK: Rosa, you are fantastic. Daisy, our own place!

ROSA: And make sure you put something in there about the garden. The garden goes with the house.

OLD MAN: Yeah, don't forget that. If anything brings her back, it will be the garden.

BROCK: Right, the garden. (Pause.) I can hardly wait to tell them at the office.

DAISY: Oh, great.

BROCK: Write down everything you can think of, and I'll meet you in a few days to negotiate.

DAISY: Negotiate?

BROCK: (Checks watch.) If I hurry, I can make it downtown to break the news before the weekend. It will ruin their golf game! (To DAISY, kissing her, patting her tummy.) See you later. Don't worry. We're going to be great. (To ROSA, kissing her hand.) So long, Grandma! And thanks.

As BROCK exits, OLD MAN pats him on the back. ROSA packs up some things for her trip, and gestures a fond farewell to OLD MAN before she exits. OLD MAN goes back to his side of the fence, where he continues to watch DAISY. She swings, twists to the rhythm of her words.

DAISY: What about me? What about us? Oh, baby, I'm so sorry. But we'll be together here. You and me . . . and the ghosts. In and out of our minds, back and forth in our lives. But they won't make me leave you. Never. You and me . . . we'll be on our own, at the center. While they go north and south and up and down. We'll be here. (Singsong.) Round and round the garden, goes the teddy bear. (Suddenly frightened of the ghost she just heard. She goes to the gladiola beds, and digs up the bulbs with her bare hands.) White ghosts in the ground! Get out, ghosts! Get away from me! Go away!

Blackout.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

A year later, the end of May, mid-afternoon. BROCK brings his socks, shoes, shirt, tie, jacket into the garden. He carries a cordless telephone and a baby monitor.

BROCK: Uh, oh, yeah. 468-S-T-O-R-K. Hello, Doris. Yes, it's me again. No show today. Are you sure you don't want to take legal action against your driver? I'd do it as a favor. Doris, it's the third time this month! Things are getting pretty tense around here. Yeah, well you know, the baby's just switching from formula to real milk, and uh, well, you know the situation. I need my diapers, Doris! (Pause.) Yeah, a bit red. Hey, I'll try that. Thanks. O.K., if he doesn't show up today, we'll get serious, right, Doris? Call me tomorrow. Bye. (Checks watch, dials again.) Hi there, this is Brock. Has Daisy returned yet? Oh. Well, if she comes back first, will you tell her to get home as soon as possible? I think she may have forgotten that I have an early meeting this afternoon. (Pause. Annoyed.) It's Brock. Right. What's yours? Thanks, Felicia. (Disengages. Dials again.) Hi, Jean, it's Brock. Can I talk to Dad for a moment? Thanks. (Pause.) Hi, Dad? Look, I'm going to be a bit late for that meeting. Yes, I know I'm the one bringing him in, but could you give him the art collection tour or something? Yeah, he'll love that. Thanks. I owe ya. Later. (Hangs up.) Oh, damn, I forgot to turn this on. (Clicks on baby monitor. Sound of baby breathing, asleep.) Good. Daisy, what are you doing? (His back is turned. He continues dressing.)

ROSA: Hello!

BROCK: It's about time! I'm late! Where were you?

ROSA: I had to take a cab.

BROCK: What's wrong with the car?

ROSA: I don't know.

BROCK: Not again. This is all I need today. Could you go call me a . . . (He sees ROSA.) Rosa!

ROSA: Hello, dear. (She hugs him.)

BROCK: Sorry. I thought you were . . . Daisy didn't tell me you were coming home!

ROSA: She doesn't know. It's a surprise.

BROCK: It's great! Wow, Rosa, you amaze me.

ROSA: (Laughs.) How is everything?

BROCK: Just wait till you see the baby!

ROSA: Where is she? Can I?

BROCK: She's just napping now. I'd take you in to see her, but Daisy doesn't like me waking her up. And Daisy should be here any minute.

ROSA: Oh?

BROCK: Let's sneak upstairs anyway. You gotta see her.

ROSA: Well, no, if Daisy doesn't like it, then . . .

BROCK: She's got your eyes, Rosa. She really does. And my nose. And Daisy's hair. And Cam's mouth. That jaw. You know, really stubborn when she wants to be?

ROSA: Oh!

BROCK: Come see.

ROSA: No, we better not. Daisy's coming, you said. Plenty of time for me to meet her.

BROCK: (Grabs monitor.) At least you can hear her! Listen.

ROSA: She sounds . . . lovely. What is this thing?

BROCK: You just plug it into the baby's room and you can hear everything she says from out here.

ROSA: Really? Think I'll just sit down in my old garden for a while and . . . listen to her.

BROCK: (Brushes dead leaves off a bench for her.) Are you sure?

ROSA: This is . . . fine. You go ahead and finish dressing.

BROCK: I'll take your bag in.

BROCK exits.

ROSA: Haven't done the fall cleanup yet, much less the spring planting. (She pokes around at some pots and beds.) I'll need to. . . (Her mind wanders to her plants still half dormant in the ground) . . . open it up here to the sun, and maybe move some of those out further, and plant something new here, yes. (She falls to her knees and begins her reacquaintance with familiar soil.) These are going to get crowded out this year. And what about . . . ah, that must be a struggle under all that brush. There.

DAISY enters in a hurry. She doesn't notice ROSA.

ROSA: Oh, hello, dear.

DAISY: Aaah! Grandma! What are you doing here? Are you alright?

ROSA: I'm just grand.

DAISY: What happened?

ROSA: (She stands.) I just had an urge to see you . . . and my old garden.

DAISY: It's still here.

ROSA: Somewhere under all these leaves.

DAISY: Uh, I was going to call a crew today!

ROSA: What a coincidence.

DAISY: It was on my list. I'll show you. (Rummaging in case.)

ROSA: Well, now I'm here, there's no need, is there?

DAISY: If you say so.

ROSA: The cool spring mornings will be . . . invigorating.

DAISY: Oh, I'll bet you're fed up with the heat of the tropics.

ROSA: Oh, no. I love the heat.

DAISY: The bugs, then.

ROSA: Oh, every gardener has to cope with bugs. (Pause.) So, what about you? Is the arrangement working? Brock seems to be. . . in one piece.

DAISY: He doesn't complain.

ROSA: Are you pleased with the contract?

DAISY: I'm living with it.

ROSA: And Brock?

DAISY: He's good with the baby. She . . . adores him. He gets things done around here.

ROSA: (Looking about garden.) Some things.

DAISY: He seems to be doing well with the firm.

ROSA: But how is he with you?

DAISY: He's . . . polite.

ROSA: Polite? Didn't you ever fall in love with each other?

DAISY: (Accusing.) How do you fall in love with your co-parent? We're past that, Grandma. We've got a contract!

ROSA: So. I came just in time, then.

DAISY: For what?

ROSA: It's my home, and it's my garden, and I like to make sure everything is going to grow well.

DAISY: The baby is growing. She's thriving with all the attention she gets from her two co-parents.

ROSA: I can hardly wait to meet her.

DAISY: She's just about taking steps already. She's going to be an early walker.

ROSA: (Mock disappointed.) Oh, she won't want to cuddle. She'll be running away on me!

DAISY: That would be a switch, wouldn't it?

BROCK returns, dressed, carrying briefcase.

BROCK: Daisy! Where were you?

DAISY: At lunch.

BROCK: Until 3? With whom?

DAISY: The advertising agency.

BROCK: (Annoyed.) Oh, I hope I didn't rush you. Sorry, Rosa, I've gotta go. I'll see you later. (To DAISY; this is a routine.) The baby's been sleeping for twenty minutes. The monitor's out here. Her milk bottles are all made. The diaper man didn't come yet; I've already called to complain, but if he hasn't come by seven tonight, call me before I come home, and I'll pick up some disposables, otherwise we'll be in trouble tomorrow morning. Oh, and you've got a playgroup executive meeting tonight at 8, so I guess I'll be home before then.

ROSA: Don't worry, I'll be here.

BROCK: Oh, Rosa. Could you? My desk is piled a mile high and I've got to see people all afternoon. What's left of it.

ROSA: I'm looking forward to having my little birdie all to myself.

BROCK: Bye, Rosa. And thanks.

ROSA: (Kisses him.) See you later.

BROCK: (To DAISY, guardedly.) Bye. Should I pick you up after your meeting?

DAISY: It's O.K. I can catch a ride. Bye.

BROCK exits.

ROSA: (Pause.) Well, it looks like I've got a lot of work to do around here.

DAISY: Oh, I wish you could flick your magic wand and make him realize that I'm not a . . . time clock!

ROSA: I don't have a magic wand. If I did, the first thing I'd do is flick away all this debris!

DAISY: I lied. I really didn't have a yard crew on my list today.

ROSA: I know. But poof! and there I was. (Laughs.) But I'm not going to do it alone. Here, give me a hand. Let's get these benches out of the way, and then we can sweep. Where's my magic broom?

DAISY: (Laughs.) Oh, Grandma.

ROSA: (As DAISY finds broom.) So you do want him after all.

DAISY: I don't know. (Pause.) After the baby was born, I don't think I noticed he was even here! I was so preoccupied with her. But he was here. He took care of everything. And he let me be alone with her. And then I went back to work, and I resented the time he spent

with her, and now . . . we don't see each other much, you know. I work all day Saturday and he works all day Sunday.

ROSA: Well. The first thing we have to do is sweep off this patio so that people feel like lingering in the garden. (She sweeps, DAISY finds a basket for the debris.) Between shifts.

DAISY: I hope you're not too late.

Blackout. LIGHTS indicate time change.—MUSIC from the OLD MAN's radio.

SCENE TWO

The next day. OLD MAN is in the garden, sprawled on a lounge chair covered by a blanket. ROSA pulls off the blanket, folds it into a bed for flowers, and plants some seeds from a packet in her pocket.

ROSA: You look like a bearded barncat.

OLD MAN: Cheers.

ROSA: Layin' around here as if you have no home of your own.

OLD MAN: Brock doesn't mind havin' me around for company.

ROSA: Just look at your trees. How could you forsake them like that? Is that the reason you loaf around here . . . your trees make you feel guilty?

OLD MAN: (Burps) Aren't you supposed to be babysitting?

ROSA: I am. I've got the monitor.

OLD MAN: It's not turned on.

ROSA: Oh. (Baby sleeping sounds.) Good.

OLD MAN: Got ya.

ROSA: Oh, you . . . look at all the deadwood dangling from this tree. Never did get to this one last spring, did you?

OLD MAN: The robin was in my way.

ROSA: She didn't stay all year.

OLD MAN: Yes, she did. Once she got a mind to move in, she stayed. Every time I looked over here, there she was.

ROSA: You must be drinking too much wine.

OLD MAN: Devil, that robin. She even pulled up your gladiola bed.

ROSA: My wedding glads? A bird couldn't do that.

OLD MAN: You wouldn't know. You didn't stay long enough to see them sprout.

ROSA: They're gone? Uprooted? They didn't bloom last fall? No one dug them up for the winter?

OLD MAN: All gone. Just like Rosa. Here today, gone tomorrow. But not that robin. Pesky little critter. Hear her chirpin' and scoldin' all the time, even from my place. Seems to shut her up when I'm layin' here, though.

ROSA: I haven't heard a robin.

OLD MAN: There she is now.

DAISY enters.

DAISY: Grandma! Can I get you to start lunch? The baby will be up any second, and I've got a meeting with the accountant. Oh, and could you pick up something for dinner? There's nothing left in the house. And the sink in the kitchen. Do you know what's wrong with it? It's been dripping ever since we moved in. Maybe you could phone a plumber and get that fixed. If anyone calls, I should be at the. . .Oh, hi, Old Man. . . I'll be at the shop by 2:30. Well, I'm off. Cheerio!

OLD MAN: Cheerio!

DAISY exits.

ROSA: (Calling after DAISY.) Remember, we're going to do some transplanting after dinner tonight.

OLD MAN: I think I spook her.

ROSA: But you don't spook me. (She pours his wine into a pot with winter-dead plant still in it.)

OLD MAN: (Irritated.) Rosa.

ROSA: I wonder if you can still do a solid day's hard work.

OLD MAN: Sure, but I don't want to.

ROSA: Can you stay sober all day long?

OLD MAN: Don't want to do that, either.

ROSA: So you want to rot here, a poor old man, just like this poor old plant.

OLD MAN: I'm not rotting. (Feels his beard.) I'm just . . . resting.

ROSA: Resting from what?

OLD MAN: I dunno. I guess I'm just being a bum.

ROSA: A boozing old buzzard.

OLD MAN: Rosa, what do you want me to do? My only friend in the world, and you take off on me. Migrate like a blasted bird. After you left, there was no one to play cards with and now the only person to talk to around here is Brock. When he's here.

ROSA: I thought he had half-days with the baby. It's in the contract.

OLD MAN: Oh, sure, but Daisy's got him taking that baby to swimming lessons, and they do all the grocery shopping, and then there's that playgroup. . .

ROSA: What do you do in a playgroup for nine-month-olds?

OLD MAN: You should see the handouts he gets. Pages full of songs and ditties he's got to learn for the next week.

ROSA: This was Daisy's idea?

OLD MAN: She's the boss. Promise me you won't tell her. . .

ROSA: What?

OLD MAN: Brock lets me sit with the baby once in a while.

ROSA: You babysit her?

OLD MAN: Once in a while when Brock wants to have a shower, or make some telephone calls, he asks me over.

ROSA: At least you make yourself useful. Does the baby ever get to use her fancy new swing?

OLD MAN: Piece of junk. I would have made one with sides and a bar like that for her, but Daisy wanted to buy one instead. A plastic one. Better than wood, she says.

ROSA: So you just put down your tools.

OLD MAN: The next thing I'll make is a box to crawl in when they bury me.

ROSA: Over my dead body.

OLD MAN: That's not much of a threat.

ROSA: I don't understand you, Old Man. Last year you sat me down in my chair on this spot and told me to get going, the sooner the better.

OLD MAN: I didn't want those girls eating you up.

ROSA: That's not it.

OLD MAN: Never thought you would stay so long.

ROSA: I said I would.

OLD MAN: I told you to go because . . . you wanted to.

ROSA: I'm glad you did.

OLD MAN: But you didn't end up taking your chair.

ROSA: I was going to send for it when I was settled. (Pause.) I'll take it back with me this time, for sure.

OLD MAN: (He goes to get it for her, a bit dizzy when he gets up.) I put it away in the shed for the winter. They didn't think of it.

ROSA: Thanks. It still is my best chair. (She sits.)

OLD MAN: I thought it would be just a little holiday, especially since you didn't get the money out of the shop to buy your garden plot.

ROSA: I didn't spend much while I was away. I'm saving up.

OLD MAN: This hotel you're staying at must be pretty cheap.

ROSA: It's free. Including meals.

OLD MAN: Free? Haven't they heard of money on that island?

ROSA: It's free for me because I work for the hotel. I've got a job, Old Man. My first job!

OLD MAN: They payin' you, too?

ROSA: A little.

OLD MAN: So what do you do? (Snorts.) The only thing you're good at is gardening.

ROSA: I'm the head gardener! I grow produce for the kitchen and flowers for the tables in the restaurant.

OLD MAN: What do you mean, "head" gardener?

ROSA: I've got the owners' two grandsons as helpers. I give 'em jobs, and they do it! But they also do a lot of the fishing, so they're not always around when I need them. They're expert fishermen already, and just kids.

OLD MAN: Good fishing, eh?

ROSA: There's a whole sea to fish in.

OLD MAN: Can you hear it from where you are?

ROSA: Sometimes at night. If the wind isn't too strong.

OLD MAN: You get good winds, eh?

ROSA: Hurricanes, so they say. Haven't seen one yet.

OLD MAN: (Takes a drink.) Hurricanes. (Takes another drink.) Don't know as I'd like to see a hurricane.

ROSA: I thought I got rid of that for you. You said you only had a jar. Let me see where. . . (She searches his jacket.)

OLD MAN: Hey, you can't do that. Oh, that feels good, Rosa. Go ahead, check the inside pockets.

ROSA: Don't get excited, you old badger. Where are you hiding it? (She finds the flask in his back pants pocket.) All these years you've been telling me it's only one jar, and you've been filling it up all the time?

OLD MAN: It's my one little pleasure, Rosa. Come on, give it here.

ROSA: I will not. (She pours it into a pot.)

OLD MAN: Rosa, you've got no right. No right at all. You're not my mother. You're not my wife. You're not even my friend. Why don't you go back to your little island paradise and forget all about me? I'll be gone before you know it. (He starts to leave.)

ROSA: Where're you off to, all heated up like that?

OLD MAN: Gonna go build me a box.

OLD MAN exits.

SCENE THREE

Just before dusk. ROSA is cleaning up her flower beds. CAMELLIA and BROCK enter from opposite directions.

BROCK: Cam! I was wondering when you'd get here.

CAMELLIA: I . . . couldn't leave right away. I just got a new calf.

BROCK: Raising cattle now?

CAMELLIA: Well, just the calf and its mother.

BROCK: When do I get to come up and meet the family?

CAMELLIA: Whenever you want.

BROCK: The outdoor life looks better on you all the time.

CAMELLIA: Thanks.

BROCK: That day we had up there . . . was one of my best.

CAMELLIA: I enjoyed it, too. I'd like to do it again.

BROCK: Maybe now that Rosa's here . . .

CAMELLIA: Hey, Brock, is Grandma O.K.?

BROCK: Yeah. Except . . . did she tell you that she was coming back?

CAMELLIA: No!

BROCK: She sure took me by surprise.

CAMELLIA: Is she staying put this time?

BROCK: I'm half hoping she will.

CAMELLIA: If she did . . .

BROCK: I could go. I know. Cam, I know.

ROSA stands up.

ROSA: I decided to return with the spring birds.

CAMELLIA: Oh! You scared me.

BROCK: Me too.

ROSA: Just look at that tan.

CAMELLIA: Look at yours!

ROSA: How is your cabin in the woods?

CAMELLIA: Maybe you could come and see it.

ROSA: Pick the warmest day and I'll go.

CAMELLIA: There will be lots of preserving to be done this summer. Maybe you could come up and give me a hand. You know all the recipes.

ROSA: Oh, you can manage. I could let you have my canning book. It should be somewhere in the kitchen.

BROCK: I can find it for you. Come on, Cam.

ROSA: Oh, Daisy's just rocking the baby to sleep. You know how she is about noise in the house when the baby is going to bed. Are you two hungry? I could warm up some dinner.

CAMELLIA: Not me. I ate on the road.

BROCK: I had a late lunch. Hey, Cam, want to go for a jog?

ROSA: A jog?

BROCK: Come on, I haven't been out since you were here at Easter.

ROSA: Since when do you jog?

CAMELLIA: Daisy gave me a book for Christmas.

ROSA: You need a book to learn how to jog?

CAMELLIA: She said it would build up my stamina.

BROCK: She's already got lots. Running a homestead all by herself. (To CAM.) I'll race you the last mile.

CAMELLIA: I just got here.

BROCK: I'll go change. You can wear that.

CAMELLIA: O.K. You're on.

BROCK exits, taking CAMELLIA's bag in with him.

ROSA: You like it here.

CAMELLIA: I'm in love with that baby.

ROSA: It takes a man to make a baby.

CAMELLIA: My cow had a baby this year. Without a bull. I had her artificially inseminated, and voilà.

ROSA: Sounds like what Daisy tried to do. Too bad for the bull.

CAMELLIA: It's quite a devious feeling. I know who *he* is, but he doesn't know me! And we have a beautiful little calf.

ROSA: We?

CAMELLIA: The cow and I.

ROSA: Haven't you met anybody?

CAMELLIA: Grandma, really, I'm happy with my cow and my calf and my sheep.

ROSA: Animals!

CAMELLIA: They're good listeners. And they're affectionate.

ROSA: But you must be lonely.

CAMELLIA: I'm used to being alone. I don't mind it. And once in a while, I come down and see Daisy and the baby.

ROSA: And Brock.

CAMELLIA: Yeah.

ROSA: But your animals are only a substitute.

CAMELLIA: What?

ROSA: They're a way of peopling your world . . . without people.

CAMELLIA: I'm not a hermit. I see some people.

ROSA: But you can easily let your animals become people.

CAMELLIA: So what if I do?

ROSA: Then the only person in your world is yourself.

CAMELLIA: How do you know?

ROSA: (Pause.) I've been the same way with my plants.

CAMELLIA: (Pause.) You always did have your nose in the ground.

ROSA: I know. And I had to move away and start a new garden, where I had very little human distraction, to find that out. Look at you, you've seen your sister more this past year than you have in ages. Don't you know why?

CAMELLIA: Because of the baby.

ROSA: Partly. But there's something in you that doesn't want to be the only one in your world. It keeps coming back to the people you want to know best. Daisy, the baby, and Brock.

CAMELLIA: I've gotten to know Brock better. There's more to him than I thought at first.

ROSA: And Daisy?

CAMELLIA: It's like looking at myself a year ago. I can hardly stand it.

ROSA: But you do it. Because you have to. You don't want to be alone.

CAMELLIA: Yes, I do. I love not knowing what time it is, and letting one activity just flow into the next. You can't do that when you're responsible to another person.

ROSA: But you're responsible to your animals.

CAMELLIA: Yes, but it doesn't seem that way. They're part of how I live, but they're not part of me. And they make me feel like I'm not the crucial mystery of the universe. *They're* the fascinating ones.

ROSA: But isn't it hard on your heart to watch sunset after sunset, every silent night?

CAMELLIA: It's one of my favorite rituals.

ROSA: It used to be for me, too. When I had Geordie. But I can't watch the sun drown in the sea by myself.

CAMELLIA: I'm not saying I'll be so private forever. But for now.

ROSA: I think I know. (Pause.) It took great courage for me to come back.

CAMELLIA: Why did you come back?

ROSA: I left too many lives in disarray.

CAMELLIA: I'm alright.

ROSA: Maybe, but Daisy's not. Remember who she reminds you of?

CAMELLIA: Brock is the one I'm worried about. I can't see why he puts up with her.

ROSA: The baby keeps him here. He and Daisy ignore each other and compete for time with that baby.

CAMELLIA: I know. (Pause.) She is a gorgeous baby.

ROSA: And I'm concerned about the Old Man.

CAMELLIA: Not him. He's drunk most of the time, now, according to Daisy. She doesn't like having him around so much. She wants my advice about getting him into a retirement home.

ROSA: Send him away?

CAMELLIA: He's not hurting anybody but himself. Maybe he needs to go dry out somewhere.

ROSA: Put him in a cage?

CAMELLIA: As far as we know, he has no relatives who could take care of him.

ROSA: Take care of him?

CAMELLIA: Maybe Daisy's exaggerating. She never really liked him, even when she was a kid. He was always sitting in a tree, listening, watching.

ROSA: Yes, he likes trees.

Blackout. MUSIC, LIGHTS.

SCENE FOUR

BROCK and CAMELLIA after a jog. It is morning.

BROCK: You must enjoy being outside all day. I'd love that.

CAMELLIA: You would?

BROCK: Actually I shouldn't complain. At least I get time at home with the baby, and I can take her out for walks.

CAMELLIA: More than most guys.

BROCK: I get to the office about three o'clock. Do you know what it smells like after a whole day of people smoking and eating lunch at their desks and throwing old coffee grounds into the wastebaskets?

CAMELLIA: I wouldn't know. My entire work life was doused with the smell of cut flowers. Yuck!

BROCK: This is worse, believe me. I turn my ionizer on right away. Then I've got to work while everyone's going home at five, and I'm there to listen to the vacuum cleaners at night.

CAMELLIA: Your clients come in at night?

BROCK: Most of them love it. Gives them more time in their work day. Weren't you always a Sunday appointment?

CAMELLIA: You're right.

BROCK: I used to go camping a lot on weekends. I wish I could spend every weekend away somewhere again. Hey, you know that day we had up at your place?

CAMELLIA: It was pretty cool for camping. You could have stayed inside with the rest of us, you know.

BROCK: No, it was great. You know, my mother told me once, I was very young, but I remember, she said, if you see or do or feel something that interests you very much, then take the time to paint it, every bit of it, in your mind, and you'll have it forever.

CAMELLIA: She was a painter?

BROCK: Yeah. (Pause.) Anyway, that day was worth painting.

CAMELLIA: You've been away more than that. The Old Man told me you took him out tree planting.

BROCK: Yeah, he did pretty well. Didn't move too fast for a few days afterward, though.

CAMELLIA: Maybe I could recruit you two experts to come plant berry bushes in a few weeks. I'm putting in over five hundred. I could use the help.

BROCK: You mean the Old Man and me?

CAMELLIA: Yeah. Unless you thought that Daisy . . .

BROCK: No thanks.

CAMELLIA: How is it going? Any better?

BROCK: She loves me, she loves me not.

CAMELLIA: Must beat living alone, anyway.

BROCK: That's what I'm doing, except I get to be a daddy for part of the day. That's undeniably the best part. The only time I'm really happy is when I'm with that child.

CAMELLIA: She sure is a daddy's girl.

DAISY enters, back from work early. She hears this last comment.

DAISY: How was your run today?

BROCK: Fantastic. Cam's starting to set quite a pace.

DAISY: She jogs, she milks cows, she bales hay. Anything else?

BROCK: You should have seen her today with the baby. We were playing with that little stuffed lamb she got from Cam at Easter, remember? Cam made all these sheep sounds, and made her giggle so hard she couldn't stop. We were all roaring on the floor. Rosa came in from shopping and got started, too.

DAISY: So she does a good sheep.

CAMELLIA: How was your day?

DAISY: I thought I'd come home early so Brock could get in some extra hours. I cut you short one day last week, remember?

BROCK: You didn't have to come home. Rosa or Cam could watch the baby if I wanted to leave early.

DAISY: Maybe I just felt like it, O.K.? I thought I'd take the baby on a little excursion this afternoon.

CAMELLIA: Where? Can I come?

DAISY: To the art gallery. There's this new show on, lots of color and form. I thought it would be perfect for her first trip.

CAMELLIA: The art gallery? How about the zoo?

DAISY: We're leaving at 12:30 if you want to go.

CAMELLIA: No thanks.

BROCK: I'll drop you off on my way to work. I better have a shower.

DAISY: How about if I drop you off? I don't want to take the bus back. That way I can let her sleep in the car on the way home if she wants.

BROCK: O.K. I'll take the bus.

DAISY: No, I'll pick you up tonight, O.K.?

BROCK: O.K. I'll call when I'm finished.

DAISY: See you later.

BROCK: Later. Thanks for the run, Cam.

BROCK exits.

CAMELLIA: (Wanting to change the subject.) So how's business?

DAISY: You really want to know? I thought maybe you and Brock would have jogged down to the shop one day to see it.

CAMELLIA: I already know what it looks like.

DAISY: Aren't you curious?

CAMELLIA: No. You just keep sending me those cheques. Pretty soon you'll be able to buy me out.

DAISY: I brought some printouts home. (Takes them out of her briefcase.) Interested?

CAMELLIA: (Trying not appear curious.) Maybe. Looks like you're using a new inventory program.

DAISY: Yeah. Seems to work better.

CAMELLIA: (Leafing through.) Good job.

DAISY: The accountant thinks things have progressed well this year, considering the change in management.

CAMELLIA: Looks like you've got the touch.

DAISY: Did I tell you I changed accountants? The one you were using cost too much. And he was constantly making passes at me.

CAMELLIA: I'm crushed. I guess he flirts with everyone. (Winks.) What's the new one like?

DAISY: She's a she. I like her a lot. Single mother, like me.

CAMELLIA: Daisy, you're not a single mother. Brock's not a painting on the wall.

DAISY: What is he, Cam?

CAMELLIA: What do you mean?

DAISY: I mean, what is he to you?

CAMELLIA: He's not my brother-in-law.

DAISY: He's the father of my child.

CAMELLIA: You finally noticed.

DAISY: (Pause.) So what is he to you? A jogging buddy? A nature nut? A free lawyer? What did you call him before? A jock?

CAMELLIA: (Pause.) He's a friend.

DAISY: (Pause. Sincere.) Can I ask you a favor?

CAMELLIA: What?

DAISY: Will you go in for me tomorrow? It's Saturday, and I'd like to take the day off.

CAMELLIA: So do it. You don't need me.

DAISY: You know what it's like on Saturdays. Come on.

CAMELLIA: Why?

DAISY: Please. Will you?

CAMELLIA: O.K. It'll be interesting to see what you've been doing.

DAISY: Thanks, Cam.

CAMELLIA: I better go find something to wear if I'm going to work tomorrow. (Pause.) Good luck.

CAMELLIA exits. The OLD MAN is hammering next door. MUSIC from his radio. DAISY packs up her printout books, takes a look around and admires the touchups she and ROSA have done to the garden. She stashes a bottle of wine and glasses under a bench. DAISY exits, exasperated by the OLD MAN'S noise. LIGHTS indicate time change. It is late evening. MUSIC from OLD MAN's radio shifts tempo. DAISY and BROCK enter. The hammering starts up again at strategic moments, allowing OLD MAN to hear the following without making it obvious that he is.

BROCK: Thanks for the ride.

DAISY: No problem. I enjoyed it. You can really smell spring in the air tonight.

BROCK: (Takes a deep breath, which turns into a yawn.) Yeah.

DAISY: Did you notice how Grandma has transformed this garden?

BROCK: Yeah. She sure loves it out here. She's always puttering around.

DAISY: (Pause.) I've been helping her out a bit. Hey, I planted a surprise for you.

BROCK: You did?

DAISY: Come on, sit down. (Fishes out a bottle of wine and two glasses from under a garden bench.) Ta da!

BROCK: No kidding? What are we celebrating?

DAISY: How about Grandma? To Grandma and her garden.

BROCK: Which one?

DAISY: This one.

BROCK: Do you think she's going to stay?

DAISY: Maybe.

BROCK: Really? Is that what you want?

DAISY: Well, it's her house. I mean, we're not exactly paying guests. But . . . we're family.

BROCK: I'm not.

DAISY: (Pause.) All I'm saying is, she might decide to live here again . . . if we don't take advantage of her.

BROCK: What's that supposed to mean?

DAISY: Just that . . . we've asked her to take over for us quite a bit lately.

BROCK: You mean I have.

DAISY: Have you?

BROCK: Yeah, a little. Someone's got to entertain Cam.

DAISY: Cam doesn't need to be entertained.

BROCK: (Pause.) So we're all taking a little holiday from our regular routine.

DAISY: Yeah, I was thinking about something like that, for tomorrow. I mean, it's Saturday, and Cam said she'd take the shop for me, and Grandma will take the baby, and I thought maybe that you and I could . . . take the day together. Maybe drive out to the lake, have a barbeque, watch the sun set, camp out?

BROCK: I thought you didn't want to take advantage of Rosa. Saturday is my day with the baby.

DAISY: I know, but just this once, while we've got the chance. It would be good for us, Brock.

BROCK: Us? What do you mean us? There's never been an us from the time we moved into separate bedrooms in this house!

DAISY: I know, but . . .

BROCK: It's a little late to be thinking about a honeymoon.

DAISY: Brock, I just want to take the day off together.

BROCK: Take the day off. Do it by yourself. See how it feels to be in solitary. Baby and me will stay here with Grandpa.

DAISY: Who?

BROCK: Grandpa. Can't you hear him over there? (Calling next door.) Hey, Grandpa, what are you making?

DAISY: Don't call him that! Don't ever call him that again!

DAISY exits. BROCK drinks wine in the garden, goes over to the fence with bottle and glasses. The hammering stops. OLD MAN climbs over. They sit on the fence.

OLD MAN: That a fresh bottle you got there?

BROCK: (Pours a drink into DAISY's glass.) Cheers.

OLD MAN: Cheers. (Pause.) Don't worry, she'll be O.K. Do her good to shake her up like that.

BROCK: That was dumb.

OLD MAN: So what? Ya gotta be dumb sometimes to get smart. You did the right thing.

BROCK: Yeah, I've got a date with you tomorrow.

OLD MAN: So what? She's no fun. Eh, Brock, eh? You've been co-habitating without the "co" now for a year. Many more nights like this and you're going to turn into a drunk like me.

BROCK: Yeah.

OLD MAN: Cheers.

BROCK: Cheers.

ROSA enters.

ROSA: Mind if I join you?

BROCK: Not at all. Glass of wine, Rosa?

ROSA: No thanks.

OLD MAN: You sure you want *her* over here?

BROCK: What happened? Did you two have a little tiff?

ROSA: I'm not sorry for what I said, Old Man. I meant every word. You're drinking yourself to death, and I don't want to watch you do it.

OLD MAN: Who said you were going to watch? You'll be flutterin' off again in no time. Maybe if you stayed . . .

ROSA: I'm not staying.

BROCK: (Pause.) I hope we've made you feel at home.

ROSA: What a ridiculous thing to say, Brock. This is my home.

OLD MAN: But you don't live here anymore.

ROSA: What about him, Brock? Have you made *him* feel at home?

BROCK: Sure. Old Man and me are buddies.

OLD MAN: Cheers.

BROCK: Cheers.

ROSA: Is that right? Tell me, Brock, have you been doing any legal work for Daisy lately?

BROCK: Rosa, I don't want to talk business.

ROSA: This is life and death business.

BROCK: Hey, I've done a few collection letters for the shop, that's all. Don't think anybody died from them. Though they were kind of ferocious. Pretty good, I thought.

OLD MAN: Lay off, Rosa. He's had a rough time tonight.

ROSA: The look of a man turned down by a woman.

OLD MAN: Not exactly.

BROCK: I don't know how I ever thought this would work.

OLD MAN: It was Rosa's idea.

BROCK: I wanted it so much. But I don't think Daisy ever did. She's so full of things to do, meetings, deliveries, schedules, that there's no room for anything else.

ROSA: Maybe she's still . . . what did she call it?. . . bonding with her baby.

BROCK: No, that's definitely not it.

ROSA: Perhaps she hasn't quite noticed you yet. You blend in so well, following instructions, checking off lists.

BROCK: I feel like I've been put on trial for a year to prove myself as a fit father!

OLD MAN: Should have heard him tell her off just now.

ROSA: Probably long overdue.

OLD MAN: Could stand to do it some more. Got her attention, didn't you? Here, have some more of this stuff. It'll give ya what ya need.

BROCK: (Pause.) Wish I could patch things up like you two.

OLD MAN: Who says it's patched up?

ROSA: Yeah?

BROCK: Well, at least you're speaking to each other.

OLD MAN: Both as stubborn as suckering shoots.

ROSA: I stand up to the old fool. He can't scare me off.

OLD MAN: That's a good thing. But I won't take bossing from any absentee neighbor.

ROSA: I'm not your suffering neighbor, you old goat.

OLD MAN: What are you then?

ROSA: I'm . . .

OLD MAN: Let's see. An old hen?

ROSA: No.

OLD MAN: How about an old mare?

ROSA: What are you doing?

OLD MAN: How do you think I feel, always "old"? You've never called me by my name, even when I wasn't "old."

ROSA: I thought you weren't very fond of your real name.

OLD MAN: Bet you don't even know what it is.

BROCK: Daisy asked me the other day what it was. I wonder why?

ROSA: Bet I know why.

OLD MAN: Never mind. Stick with Old Man.

BROCK: I like Grandpa better.

OLD MAN: I need another drink.

BROCK: I'll get another bottle.

BROCK exits.

ROSA: Grandpa?

OLD MAN: Yeah, he likes to call me that. Kind of a joke between us.

ROSA: What's so funny?

OLD MAN: Hell, you know, Brock and me, we're two of a kind. On the edge of the garden. Always here, but invisible. (Pause.) Boo!

ROSA: Aaah!

OLD MAN: What's the matter, afraid of ghosts?

ROSA: I'm not afraid of you. (Pause.) Did you get your box finished?

OLD MAN: Just needs a coat of varnish.

ROSA: When are you planning to climb in?

OLD MAN: Soon as you go.

ROSA: Oh, don't be so self-pitying.

OLD MAN: Rosie, I didn't expect I'd ever have another chance to see you.

ROSA: And don't get sentimental on top of it.

OLD MAN: What do you expect from an old man drinking under the stars with the lady he loves?

ROSA: They want to put you away! In a home. For *really* old people!

OLD MAN: Brock and Daisy?

ROSA: Daisy does. Brock doesn't know about it yet, I don't think. But Daisy's got Camellia helping her.

OLD MAN: Cammy? No way. She's always been my girl. And Brock would never do it. He's my buddy.

ROSA: Daisy's serious. And if you continue moaning about here, half corked all the time, she'll have no trouble getting you put away.

OLD MAN: Rosa, so you do care about me.

ROSA: You've got to get out. Out of that box, and away from this jar. (She grabs the jar and smashes it against the coffin in his yard.)

OLD MAN: I'm not going to let you get away with that! Where's your chair?

ROSA: Why?

OLD MAN: Where is my torch? (He goes offstage to find it.)

ROSA: What in earth are you doing?

OLD MAN: (Returns with torch, lit; he is trying to scare her rather than destroy the chair) Aahh!

ROSA: Oh, don't! Don't burn it!

OLD MAN: To cinders!

ROSA: Please! (They struggle with chair.)

OLD MAN: To ashes!

ROSA: No!

OLD MAN: To dust!

ROSA: Don't do it, please!

OLD MAN: To nothing!

ROSA: (Out of breath.) Would you bring the chair with you?

OLD MAN: Where?

ROSA: With me! You, the chair, and me. Let's go back together!

OLD MAN: (He stops.) I'll carry it myself. (He puts it over his shoulder.)

ROSA: If it will get you in shape to keep up with me.

OLD MAN: Let me tell you something, Rosa. I'm planning on lasting just as long as you. Made it my personal goal a long time ago. Just got my box made in advance for a lark.

ROSA: This won't be a holiday, you know.

OLD MAN: I don't need a holiday. I want you. If I come, you've got me for good.

OLD MAN puts down chair for ROSA to sit in. DAISY enters.

DAISY: Grandma?

ROSA: Over here.

OLD MAN: Oh, oh. Time for me to vanish. She doesn't like ghosts.

ROSA: Don't go. Not now.

OLD MAN: I'll just be up there. (He climbs up and sits in tree.)

DAISY: Grandma, it's Brock.

ROSA: What about him?

DAISY: He's going to leave.

ROSA: No, he won't. You've got a contract.

DAISY: Contracts get broken. That's why he's in business.

ROSA: What makes you so sure he will break it?

DAISY: I've known it from the beginning. I've been waiting for this to happen.

ROSA: Sounds like you were hoping for it.

DAISY: I was . . . at first. But now I feel like I'm standing on this tiny island that's only big enough for me to stand up! If I move, I'll fall into the water!

ROSA: You can't live like this!

DAISY: I've had these nightmares about him, that he's going to disappear one day, and take the baby with him, and I'll never find them, and . . . ~~it's~~ just like Mama all over again.

ROSA: That won't happen.

DAISY: What's worse is that maybe he'll go, and leave me alone with the baby.

ROSA: But isn't that what you always wanted? "A mother and child pair, like in the wild"?

DAISY: I thought I would have complete control of my life. But I never had a chance to find out. All of a sudden I was living here with Brock, and taking over the shop for Cam and living in your house with a co-parenting contract!

ROSA: All I asked is that you take care of my garden.

DAISY: And I didn't.

ROSA: We had to excavate to find it again! It's a wonder it still survived under the heavy sheets of dust and mouldy leaves. And you let a half-dead man lay around in it!

DAISY: What?

ROSA: How could you ignore the Old Man? If you had just asked him to do something for you, he might not have drowned the year away!

DAISY: What?

ROSA: He's lived here all your life! You and your sister were practically children to him! He's been my help and guide for years, and my best friend after your Grandpa died.

DAISY: That doesn't make me responsible!

ROSA: Then why should you try to get rid of him?

DAISY: I. . . was just doing some research! I didn't do anything yet!

ROSA: He's a part of this garden. He built it with me. Why did you leave it in such rude unkempt neglect?

DAISY: Because I've been too busy trying to keep Brock at a distance, and keep the baby close. (Pause.) And now the thought of her and me all alone in this world scares me to death.

ROSA: But you had the baby so you wouldn't be alone.

DAISY: (Pause.) Maybe I should be the one to go.

ROSA: Daisy!

DAISY: I'm the one who's not making it!

ROSA: But of course you are. You run the shop . . .

DAISY: My escape from this house and this man.

ROSA: But not your baby!

DAISY: He's the one she plays with while I watch the clock!

ROSA: You should be glad she has a happy relationship with her father. You had none with yours. And your mother had very little with your Grandpa! It was all left up to me, and I didn't do a very good job, did I?

DAISY: Grandma, it wasn't your fault!

ROSA: Why do you think I devoted my life to this garden? Because after your Mama, I couldn't have any more children. I wanted her to have more than just me and your poor Grandpa. So she would feel more attached to this earth. So I created a garden for her, but she didn't understand. Or she would have never left her own two beautiful girls here with me.

DAISY: I think she knew exactly what she was doing. She knew how gifted you were at making things grow. Including us.

ROSA: Oh, I can make things grow! But I can also make them tangle and tear and perforate!

DAISY: No!

ROSA: By doing nothing!

DAISY: But . . . !

ROSA: Like you did!

DAISY: Oh, Grandma!

ROSA: If you let Brock go, then no one else but you is responsible for your child.

DAISY: I refuse to make a life with him just for the sake of that convenience.

ROSA: You'll never find anyone else who loves her like he does.

DAISY: But what does that have to do with how he feels about me?

ROSA: If he has stayed with you this long, he must love you very much.

DAISY: He's more interested in Cam than me.

ROSA: But Cam doesn't live here.

DAISY: She's even more affectionate with the baby than I am.

ROSA: That's only because she hardly ever sees her. She dotes on her because she doesn't have a child of her own.

DAISY: Maybe she would just like to move in? She could have her old job back, too.

ROSA: Daisy . . .

DAISY: She sure changed her mind about Brock.

ROSA: You better listen to your heart about Brock.

BROCK enters, carrying bottle, with CAMELLIA.

CAMELLIA: There she is.

DAISY: (To ROSA.) See what I mean?

ROSA: I hope you're not planning to take that to . . . the Old Man.

BROCK: Actually, I wanted to make a toast to the ladies.

CAMELLIA: What a politician.

BROCK: To Cam. Who buried herself deep in bush country. To Rosa. Who flew to the palm trees. And to dear Daisy. Who stayed put, and set up house for her and our baby. (Singsong.) Bye baby bunting, Daddy's gone . . . (Matter-of-fact.) down the hall, but don't mind him, little baby, he's just a part-time babysitter. (Magnanimous.) To the ladies: Grandma, oh, and let's not forget Mama, and then there's big sister and little sister. To the runaways.

CAMELLIA: Brock, that's enough.

ROSA: Brock!

BROCK: Come on, doesn't it ever get a little tiresome out there in lonelyland? Hey, Cam?

CAMELLIA: No!

BROCK: Oh, that's right. You can always nuzzle with your sheep. And Rosa's got her flora and your mother's "got religion."

DAISY: Brock, don't.

BROCK: And you've got our baby. My baby. She's not a little lamb or a green growie or a world of make believe, Daisy. She's a person! Not a no-strings-attached mothering experiment!

DAISY: She is not an experiment.

BROCK: But I am. Why did you ever pick me?

CAMELLIA: (Quietly.) She told me once. She said you were "brilliant, strong, athletic, passionate."

DAISY: "Brilliant, strong, *concerned,* passionate."

BROCK: (Pause.) Why didn't I ever hear that before?

DAISY: (Pause.) You're a smart lawyer, Brock. And a good father. And you've been . . . one hell of a sport.

BROCK: Whatever happened to passionate?

DAISY: I don't know.

CAMELLIA: Look, I better get going.

BROCK: Hey, Dais?

DAISY: I'm sorry.

ROSA: (To CAMELLIA.) You sure you want to leave so late?

CAMELLIA: I feel like driving tonight. (Pause.) So, when do you want to come for a visit?

ROSA: I won't be coming. I think you know that.

CAMELLIA: You're going back.

ROSA: Why shouldn't I?

CAMELLIA: I just wish it wasn't so far away.

OLD MAN jumps down from tree.

DAISY: Aaah! (She holds on to BROCK.)

OLD MAN: You can't plant a tropical garden any closer.

CAMELLIA: Whose side are you on, anyway?

OLD MAN: I'm rooting for the plants.

CAMELLIA: (To ROSA.) I was hoping you could supervise this summer when we plant my berry bushes.

ROSA: I don't know anything about berry farms.

CAMELLIA: You don't need to. Anything grows for you.

ROSA: I'm not the one you want. Find someone who likes cows and sheep and planting in soil that's warm only three months of the year.

CAMELLIA: But what about Daisy?

DAISY: (Looking at BROCK.) Oh, I'll be alright.

CAMELLIA: What about the baby?

ROSA: My little birdie. I'll plant a tree for her in my tropical garden. Maybe someday she'll come for a visit and see it.

CAMELLIA: What about the Old Man?

OLD MAN: Don't worry about me, Cam. I'm going to watch out for her! (He shields ROSA, waving his pruning shears.)

ROSA: I'm putting him to work.

OLD MAN: We're going to plant a banana orchard. (He grabs on to the tree and swings like a monkey.)

DAISY: Bananas?

OLD MAN: Yeah. Soft ripe bananas for our worn out gums!

CAMELLIA: What do you know about banana trees?

ROSA: About as much as I know about berry bushes.

DAISY: (Letting go of BROCK.) You mean you're taking him with you?

ROSA: We'll lease the land to start, and if it produces, we'll buy it.

CAMELLIA: We?

BROCK: Way to go, Grandpa.

DAISY: Grandma?

ROSA: The Old Man needs me now, just like I needed Geordie once.

CAMELLIA: You've finally let go of him.

ROSA: I can watch the sun go down with the Old Man.

CAMELLIA: I'll think of you two when the sun sets.

DAISY: (To OLD MAN.) So that's why you're always hanging around here!

CAMELLIA: (To OLD MAN.) Always thought you had it in you. Sure took your time.

ROSA: We're going to go as soon as we can. I guess I won't see the wedding glads again this year.

OLD MAN: We can plant some more, Rosa.

ROSA: They won't grow where I live. It's too hot for the bulbs.

OLD MAN: (Sarcastically.) That's a shame.

CAMELLIA: If you'd plant a tree for *me*, I'd come.

ROSA: I've got a big clump of camellia bushes already started. I'm hoping they'll bloom this winter.

CAMELLIA: Me, too.

CAMELLIA pushes the empty baby swing.

DAISY: Why don't you go in and kiss the baby goodbye? She'll miss you.

CAMELLIA: I'd love to take her for a long weekend. Whenever you're ready.

DAISY: Soon?

BROCK: Soon.

CAMELLIA exits.
BROCK, DAISY are under tree. OLD MAN and ROSA string up lanterns.

BROCK: Old Man's got stars in his eyes tonight.

DAISY: (Laughs.) Look at him, up in our tree!

ROSA: Whose tree?

DAISY: Our tree. Your tree.

OLD MAN: I've taken care of this tree for almost fifty years.

DAISY: It's not fifty years old.

OLD MAN: Almost. It was planted when your mother was born.

ROSA: Do you remember when it was just this high?

OLD MAN: I sure do. You were only seventeen. (Pause.) I think I fell in love with you when I saw you planting the seedling. Your baby was in a basket. This yard was solid wild weeds, no fence yet, buzzing with flies. Absolutely nothing in it to please the eye. And there you were, a girl with a baby planting a tree. (Pause. He plugs in the lanterns.) And just look at her now!

BROCK: It's a magnificent tree.

ROSA: I need to know that someone will look after my old garden. I've put my life into it.

DAISY: And you want me to put my life into it, too.

ROSA: If you leave it, it will die and go back to weeds, like it was when I started it.

DAISY: You were so young!

ROSA: That's why the garden is so full of memories. So I can speak to you, and your child.

DAISY: What do you mean?

ROSA: When I'm gone, and you need me, you'll have my garden.

DAISY: (Apprehensive.) No. Grandma, not you, too!

ROSA: You'll see, it's like being in heaven.

OLD MAN: Hey, Brock, what time is it?

BROCK: Almost midnight.

OLD MAN: Too bad. Could have started on a new day. (Nudging ROSA.) New jar of wine. Except, I lost my jar tonight.

ROSA: Poor Daisy. Everyone's running away. That's what you think, don't you?

DAISY: Don't turn into a ghost, Grandma!

ROSA: You won't be frightened. Not when you feel the earth between your fingers, and sprinkle the rain water from your palm.

DAISY: Grandma! Old Man!

BROCK: What's happening, Daisy?

ROSA: You'll learn to find me in the blades and the buds you uncover in the spring. Teach your child, Daisy. She was born under a twinkling star. She brought us all back to you.

DAISY: Don't, Grandma! Not yet!

BROCK: Rosa?

ROSA and OLD MAN start to move away, slowly, in farewell. Their lines fade out.

OLD MAN: I'll be leaving you a few of my extra tools, Brock. You might want to make a couple garden chairs. You can keep my old shears. I'm going to need a machete! Oh, and that box. Why don't you fill it with sand for the little one?

ROSA: Daisy, I left one more thing for you under the rock by the tree. Maybe . . . you could let the birds have it?

OLD MAN: Cheers, Brock. Look out for that one. She's got her Grandma's ways. (Pause.) One hell of a girl!

ROSA: Goodbye.

MUSIC. ROSA, OLD MAN exit.

BROCK: The rock under the tree.

DAISY: (Helping him lift it.) A letter!

BROCK: No!

DAISY: The contract.

BROCK: The copy I gave her last year. (Pause.)

DAISY starts to tear it up, slowly.

BROCK: No! Don't!

DAISY: Let the birds have it for their nest.

BROCK takes some, and throws it to the wind. DAISY catches his hand; he touches his other hand to her hair.

Blackout. MUSIC.

SCENE FIVE

OLD MAN and ROSA on the ladder. They climb up to the platform in the "tree." LIGHTS start to dim as they talk, and blackout before the last three lines.

ROSA: Look, Old Man! Oh, I was hoping I'd see them once more!

OLD MAN: The Northern Lights. Does something to your heart every time.

ROSA: Take a good look. You won't see them on the island.

OLD MAN: Probably never see them again, then.

ROSA: Makes me wonder if Geordie . . .

OLD MAN: Hey, he was a nice guy, but I don't think he has the talent to rig up a light show like this from where he is.

ROSA: Just the same, I'd like to think he was sending us off in style.

OLD MAN: (Cupping his hands.) Hey, Geordie! Thanks! And don't worry. (To ROSA.) Look at the lights up there. You can almost hear them, cheering for us. (To Geordie.) I'll protect her!

ROSA: But I'll hold your hand during our first hurricane.

OLD MAN: Could you hold it now, Rosie?

ROSA: Don't worry, hurricanes usually don't hit very hard on my island. And we're not living in a grass hut.

OLD MAN: Where are . . . we going . . . to live?

ROSA: At the hotel, of course.

OLD MAN: Um . . . do they have . . . a place for me?

ROSA: (Pause.) What do *you* want to do?

OLD MAN: Live in love, of course.

ROSA: Might be just the thing for a couple of old gardeners.

OLD MAN: Not so old.

ROSA: Or I suppose we could just find two little cottages and live next door to each other, like we've done for almost fifty years.

OLD MAN: Suppose we could.

ROSA: You old goose!

Blackout.